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THOSE EARLIEST DAYS

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THOSE EARLIEST DAYS

BY TYCHICUS

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TO

MY MOTHER

LOUISA

AND

MY GRANDMOTHER

ELIZABETH

PREFACE

To a Friend of God,
The Man in the Pew—
THEOPHILUS of the Twentieth Century.

MANY are the names, Most Excellent, of those who have taken in hand to set forth in careful order of Chapters and Verses, a declaration of all that is to be discovered about Luke's history of some of the acts of the Apostles, as received and most surely believed by the Catholic Church.

One result of their voluminous efforts is that the theologically unlearned often find themselves struggling in waters out of their depth.

It has therefore seemed good to the present editor, (who has carefully studied for many years the witness given by learned ministers of the Word in many commentaries), to set forth in order a simple exposition of a portion of Luke's book for the less learned Lovers of God. His desire is to help the man in the twentieth-century-pew to feel the same certainty of the guidance of the Holy Spirit, which Luke provided in the first century for his friend, His Excellency, Governor Theophilus.

The editor hopes by the use of headings, and short paragraphs, to suit the mental appetite of an age which

prefers small portions of mental pabulum, rather than the massive joints of their Saxon forefathers.

Further, in deference to the fact that this is an edition of an early work, he adopts a custom of *nom-de-plume*, much in vogue in the years preceding and following A.D. 1, and signs himself

TYCHICUS.

P.S.—The Editor wishes to express his great obligations to those who have helped him, either with suggestions, or more laborious work. Among them are A. E. B., F. C. C., C. S. C., C. T. D., C. G. M., J. M., S. T. P., E. W. W., and G.W. He much regrets that his own anonymity involves theirs also.

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INTRODUCTORY

CHAPTER I

THE WRITER

This Chapter is not history. It is a preliminary picture, for a scenic background of the history which will follow, and is painted with the colours—possibility, probability, fact, and imagination.

An oldish man, of some sixty years, is sitting in a room in Rome, about A.D. 60, with two or three friends who are Romans by birth, and Christians by religion. His name is Loukas,[1] and he holds in his hands a long strip of parchment, joined to two rollers, one at each end, on which he is about to write.

You ask me, Brothers, (he says), about the work on which I am engaged, and how I came to undertake it. Let me tell you first something of my life.

I was born sixty years ago, at Antioch in Syria. My family was of good Macedonian ancestry; but we had fallen into financial straits, and I myself was brought up in the household of the father of my friend Theophilus, and studied the art of medicine that I might be able, when I grew up, to earn a livelihood. "Friend of God,"[2] his father had named my friend. He was indeed a friend to me. We grew up as boys together in his father's home, he the son of the house, I the poor dependant.

[1] In Latin, Lucas; in English, Luke.
[2] Theophilus means Friend of God.

God had put into my heart a sympathy with suffering, and even as a child I had hoped to be able to study the healing art. When I could, I brought my small offerings to the shrine of Æsculapius, the god of physicians. But there was not much belief left in the gods of our forefathers, and our religion was little more than a formal recognition of old customs. But the God Who knows the heart heard my prayer, and enabled me to take up the profession I desired.

At length my friend Theophilus was appointed governor of the region round the port of Troas; and I accompanied him thither. Although he was now His Excellency, and I but a poor physician, yet the friendship of our boyhood still remained. We lived, as you know, by the sea. That had ever a charm for me, and many hours did I spend by the quay, talking to the sailors, and learning of their trade and of the places they had seen.

Then came a day which I can never forget.

Some strangers came to our city, and ere long, news was spread abroad that they were talking about a new god. We still offered at the old shrines, but, as I said, the old beliefs had gone. Those of us who thought, felt that the Creator and Preserver of men must be above those representations of gods who were little better than human beings, and indeed inferior in morals to the best of men. True the Jews talked about a Supreme Deity, who was the only one existent. But we Greeks generally looked upon them as an austere, self-righteous, money-getting race, who were beloved by none, and who thought that few of us were worthy to be taught. We thought that they regarded themselves as the only race for whom their Supreme God cared, and that they looked on us as only food for hell.

But report said that this new-comer to Troas was a Jew with a new god, and that he did not consider us Greeks as heathen dogs.

Moved by curiosity, I went with the rest to listen to the message.

I saw a short hook-nosed man, bow-legged, with stooping shoulders, his hair thin and turning grey, and with a full beard. He was aged for his apparent years, and slow in movement. Afterwards I heard of the sufferings he had undergone, and I was to be a witness of others. Being a physician, I fully realised what he suffered.

His speech was the Greek of an educated man ; somewhat lacking in the arts of rhetoric, but the intonation was that of a gentleman.

But his eyes were what most impressed me ; piercing, and yet with a tender expression which seemed as though he had a love for the whole human race. I had never seen a Jew like this.

His eye seemed to catch mine as I entered, and to look into my very soul, and yet it seemed to say, " Come, Brother, I have a message specially for you."

He began to speak ; and the words came from his heart, without any attempt at rhetoric. He said nothing of himself, but the whole discourse was of a Man Who had been crucified, and Who had come to life again. This Man, Paul said, was a Messenger from the One God.

Curiosity had brought me, but it was his appeal to my heart which led me to go to his meetings again and again. Then I sought him privately, and ere long I felt that I must throw in my lot with him. He gave me instruction in the faith and I was baptised. Then he laid his hands on me that I might receive THE HOLY SPIRIT.

I had heard of other Greeks who had been admitted by circumcision and baptism into communion with Jews ; who were called proselytes by them, and admitted to their rites, as it seemed to us, on sufferance. But this Jew treated me as an equal, to whom he longed to impart the grace which he had received himself.

I soon learned that he was on a preaching tour, itinerating by the great Roman highways.[1]

He had visited one after another of the leading cities of the Phrygian region of the Province of Galatia. Having passed through these, he had purposed shortly to make his way back to my native city of Antioch, through the Province of Bithynia, journeying north-westwards.

One morning he said to me, " Luke, THE HOLY SPIRIT has spoken to me in a vision. I understand now why God would not allow us to travel homewards through Bithynia. Last night I saw a Macedonian, who beckoned me to cross the sea and go to help them."

I have sometimes wondered whether this were connected in some way with my own Macedonian ancestry, but he did not tell me so.

Before embarking, I went to bid farewell to my friend Theophilus. He had listened indulgently to my rhapsodies about my new teacher, but had never seen him, and was apparently not touched by what I had told him.

We sailed across the Ægean, and came by Neapolis to Philippi. There I was a witness of the ill-treatment which was but too often the lot of my teacher. He was driven from the city, and travelled via Thessalonica and

[1] The editor of " Those Earliest Days," owing to exigencies of space, omits to make Luke tell at length that this is S. Paul's Second Missionary Expedition. This must not be taken as a proof that the editor has never heard of the First Journey. *Verbum sap.*

Berea to Athens, leaving me and others to carry on the instruction necessary for our new Philippian converts.

Paul's custom on reaching a new town was always to join his country-folk at the services at their synagogue, and, when invited, to speak to the congregation and to give his message. But hide-bound in tradition as they were, and often prejudiced by the reports which travelling Jews had brought them, the great majority rejected the message. Besides, to speak of a Messiah who had been crucified seemed to most of them a paradox. When speaking to Greeks also, to tell of the resurrection of a crucified man sounded in their ears mere folly.

As you doubtless know, Paul was always sure of a place in which to speak, for wherever ten adult Jews are found, there a synagogue for prayer, and reading of their sacred books, must be maintained; and they are all most scrupulous in the observance of their religious services. He was always sure of an audience, even though it was often a hostile one. None could treat him with indifference.

From Athens he moved on to Corinth, where he had told Silas and Timothy to join him, that they might help with the work among the little community of Christian believers. Ere long he crossed the sea to Ephesus, and made his way through Syria to Cæsarea and Jerusalem, and once more reached the growing Church at Antioch.

A short time sufficed for rest, and then his never-flagging energy drove him to make another missionary expedition. He visited his Galatian friends at Derbe and Lystra, and reaching Ephesus worked among the Ephesians and their neighbours for two whole years. He was obliged here to find a place for a Christian Synagogue, as the Jews refused to allow him to speak in

theirs. Then he sent Timothy to Philippi. You may imagine our excitement as we told one another, " Paul is coming again." Soon he arrived, and spent three months in Philippi and the Greek cities where he had made converts.

The time came for his return, and he decided to cross first to Troas. An illness delayed us for a short time. Then he said to me, " My beloved physician, I cannot do without thee. Others must carry on thy work in Philippi, and thou must come with me. I never know when I shall get more of my bones broken, and have no one near who can set them. Since that time at Perga, and the day when they nearly killed me at Lystra, my right hand has grown so shapeless that I can hardly hold a pen. My letter to the friends in Galatia cost me many hours of writing of large letters. Thou must be my scribe and physician too." So we sailed to Troas and spent a week there.

I saw Theophilus, and had much talk with him. He was evidently somewhat touched, but not yet convinced of the truth of our belief.

Coasting by Ephesus to Miletus, we passed by Cyprus to Tyre. Here we changed ships, and landing at Cæsarea went up to join our friends at Jerusalem.

Ere long a very determined attack was made by the Jews on this renegade from the faith, as they deemed him ; and but for the intervention of your soldiers he would certainly have been beaten to death.

For two years he remained in Roman custody at Cæsarea, and I stayed as near to him as I could, that I might minister to his wants.

During the time that I spent in that country of Palestine, I made use of the opportunities which came to me of learning about the Jewish people and their beliefs. I became

acquainted with some of The Twelve, and the leading brethren among " the Saints." The name " Christian," first given us as a nickname in Antioch, was occasionally heard, but not among ourselves at that time.

I paid many visits to the Mount of Olives, and to the Outer Court of the Temple. I learned the position of the Beautiful Gate, of Solomon's Porch, and other prominent features of this fine building. Calvary, or " Skull Hill," was pointed out to me, and Akeldama, where the traitor Judas met his end.

I had also the inexpressible privilege of learning to know the Blessed Mother of the Lord, then about eighty years of age, and who passed to her rest during that period. She told me of His early days. Many others, too, had accounts to tell me of those three wonderful years ; and I made careful inquiries, and compared the accounts given me by those who had been eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word of the Lord. Some stories were already growing, however, which seemed to me unworthy of Him. I was most interested in the Lord's miracles of healing. Written records were being produced,[1] of which that composed by John Mark, under the guidance of Peter, seemed to me to be most worthy of credit.

The Jewish people appeared to be most exclusive, narrow in their views, and very self-opinionated. Among the educated classes, there were two prominent parties : the Pharisees, who were most scrupulous about all the details of the laws laid down in their sacred books ; and the Sadducees, who thought little of the Prophetical Books, and regarded the Law of Moses as the only matter of real religious importance. Nearly all the priests belonged to this body. A third section was

[1] Luke 1. 1.

now formed by our community, who believed that Messiah had come, and had risen from the dead, after crucifixion and burial. The uneducated classes were regarded with a certain contempt, and by some disdainfully classed together as " the sinners." Many of these had joined our body at the first, but the majority have fallen away again, since it has become evident that there is no hope of the establishment of an independent Jewish Kingdom.

One point on which there is full agreement throughout the whole nation, (whether in Palestine or in various parts of the world,) is that JHVH is the God of the Israelitish Nation, and of no other; that He looks down on all other nations as many of the Israelites do.

Perhaps the greatest problem in their religion is—Why has JHVH allowed His Chosen Servant Israel to be under the dominion of the heathen Gentiles ?

And for the most part they agree that it has been because of the sins and unfaithfulness **of their ancestors.**

No surer means can be taken to excite a Jewish audience,[1] or an individual Jew, than even to hint that their God JHVH can care for those of another race; unless these have been officially admitted as proselytes.

The people were often turbulent, and inclined to follow for a time any leader who promised them independence.

Various modes of rule have been tried by the Roman Government. Herod had been styled their king; then Romans, such as Pontius Pilate, were sent as procurators to enforce order. Then Agrippa, another member of the family of the Herods, was nominated to the kingship, and later the office of procurator has been again revived.

The Jews have several great yearly feasts, of which

[1] See S. Luke 4. 16–29.

the principal are Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. At these times large crowds of Jews assemble from all parts of the world, to be present at the great sacrifices. The people have also regular meetings in what they call their synagogues, where prayer is offered up to God, and portions of the Sacred Books are read. Some of these in Jerusalem are frequented mainly according to the different countries from which foreign Jews come; who speak the language of the nation among whom they have lived, and who often are not familiar with Aramaic, the language of Judæa. There, moreover, they may meet friends from their own country.

There are also regular hours for public prayer in the precincts of the Temple, and these were attended by our brethren.

The Sacred Books of the Jews are generally counted as being twenty-four. They are divided into three groups. Five compose the "Torah," or "The Law"; eight form a division called "The Prophets"; and the remaining eleven are spoken of as "The Scriptures," or "The Writings." These last are not generally considered to be of quite equal authority with the first two groups.

My master Paul has taught me much about these books, which contain a record of God's dealings with His Chosen People. As you may suppose, the prophecies about the admission of other nations (Gentiles, as the Jews call us) were especially interesting to me.

At length my stay in Palestine came to an end. Our beloved teacher Paul was sent to Rome on his appeal, as a Roman citizen, to the judgment of Cæsar himself, and I accompanied him hither.

What will the result be? Surely God will protect His servant.

Shortly after my arrival in Rome, the joyful news

reached me that my friend Theophilus had become one of us. But he desired further instruction, and I could not go to him. So I determined to follow the example of John Mark, and write for him an account of those Three Great Years when the Lord lived on earth.

As Mark was here in Rome, I had the use of a copy of the story which he had written, and also some sayings of the Lord compiled by. . . .[1] This I supplemented with the knowledge I had gained during those two years in Jerusalem.[2]

Now I am about to write to Theophilus my Second Volume, which is an account of the past thirty years since the Lord ascended ; and Paul has supplied me with most of my information.

Paul is sending letters to the Churches in Asia by the hand of Tychicus, and I am hoping that he will also be able to take this letter of mine to Theophilus.[3]

My roll is ready ; and I feel that I must compress the account as much as possible, that I may tell him in it the matters of real importance, which have led us brethren to our present position.

As you know, I have been present myself during a great part of the last fifteen years of Paul's mission.

Many have been the attempts to represent my dear master as teaching a different gospel from that of the other and older Apostles. And Theophilus will meet with many who will misrepresent Paul ; so I must make

[1] This compilation has been lost, except for the extracts taken from it by S. Matthew and S. Luke. Its author is generally denoted to day by the letter Q. (*i.e.* Query, or Quelle).

[2] For many years, until these works came to be looked upon as "Sacred Books," no one would think it necessary to make slavishly exact copies of them. Rather, they would freely add scraps of further information which they themselves could supply.

[3] Eph. **6.** 21 ; Phil. **4.** 22 ; Col. **4.** 7, 9, 14 ; Philem. 23, 24. See also Phil. **4.** 18, 21 ; Col. **4.** 10, 12 ; 2 Tim. **4.** 9–13.

clear to him how THE HOLY SPIRIT has led all by different paths to the same perfect faith in the Lord Whom we serve.

* * * * *

As we have intimated, some of the above imagined talk rests on conjecture, built upon a substratum of fact, and is unhistorical, when judged by modern canons of history. But S. Luke is real; the people among whom he lived are real; and we shall assume, for the present, that his history is real history.

If the sketch given above brings closer to our imagination one who has hitherto been little more than a name, it will have served one purpose of its composition.

Those readers who wish to investigate these conjectures more closely, will find the various points fully discussed in such commentaries on the book as:

The Acts—(*Cambridge Bible*), Camb. Univ. Press.

Blunt—*The Acts of the Apostles*, Oxford Univ. Press.

Rackham—*The Acts of the Apostles*, Methuen.

Ramsay—*St. Paul the Traveller and Roman Citizen; The Church in the Roman Empire*, Hodder and Stoughton.

CHAPTER II

THE PLAN AND PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

It is doubtless a truism to say that S. Luke's Second Volume was not written with a view to inform or instruct twentieth-century Christians.

Nevertheless, this truism must be carefully kept in mind. Otherwise, we shall be asking why S. Luke does not give us answers to the questions which we ask to-day, and which, perhaps, seem to us more worthy of serious consideration than, for instance, S. Stephen's sketch of early Hebrew history.

Some of us would willingly exchange this for an account of the labours and journeys of the last nine of the Apostles; or a definite declaration of the beliefs in the Early Church about the Incarnation.

We have, then, to remember first, that S. Luke wrote for his friend's benefit, with no thought that his book would one day come to be regarded as one of the most sacred treasures of the Catholic Church; and *that*, for many centuries.

Bearing this in mind, we shall not expect to find in the book any definite statement of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Church, but further evidence of the credibility of those doctrines.

Theophilus had received his instructions orally in these Articles of the Faith (Luke **1.** 4); and the First Volume was written by his friend to give him further

confirmation in his faith, and to supplement what he already knew.

This accords with the well-known aphorism: "The Church to teach, the Bible to prove."

Consequently, in the book which we now call "The Gospel according to S. Luke," we shall not expect to find an exhaustive list of facts and events; but such an account as shall substantiate the oral teaching which Theophilus had received.

Hence there may be many "omissions," according to twentieth-century demands. But such omissions will be of no account in estimating what S. Luke did *not* know.[1]

Similarly, with regard to S. Luke's Second Volume, now called "The Acts of the Apostles."

We must not expect a journalistic account of as many events as were known to S. Luke; not even a "History of the Times," to be read in the twentieth century, and written according to the twentieth-century ideas of what history should be.

Rather we must first consider:—

To what questions of Theophilus is it likely to be an answer?

Theophilus would not ask:—

Did Jesus Christ really live?

Is He Very God?

Did He command Baptism and Holy Communion? and so forth.

But rather:—

Tell me more of His acts and words.

[1] We may add, by way of illustration, that there are scores of important points in connection with this history, as to which great scholars of the twentieth century are not yet agreed; but which the editor of "Those Earliest Days" cannot even mention without unduly extending the scope of his book.

Give me a *full* account of His Trial, Death, and Resurrection.

How did He come into the world ?

And as to later occurrences, what would be the questions of Theophilus ?

Not, What are the questions of the twentieth century ?

To enable us to frame a likely estimate of such questions, let us imagine ourselves in a somewhat similar position in A.D. 1925, with a new religion offered to us.

QUESTIONS OF THEOPHILUS

Then, using our present experience to teach us something of the experience of those who lived in the first century, let us ask what we may expect to find in the " Acts of the Apostles."

We may suppose some questions to which Theophilus would like an answer to be such as these following :—

To whom am I to look for authority ?

What position do the Apostles hold among the new body of believers ?

What position does Paul hold with reference to them ?

Why is there this divergence of views among our brethren ?

Why are we Gentiles admitted to the position of " God's Elect " on easier terms than Jews are ?

Are we Jews by religion, though not by birth ?

Are we to believe that Jews who do not join us, no longer rank as " God's Elect " ?

If we are not concerned with the Jewish religion, have we any concern with their Sacred Books (The Old Testament) ?

To some such questions S. Luke will give an answer

in his Second Volume, together with an account of events in which he has had a personal share. But the events (in themselves) are not of the *first* consequence. He will choose such events as show the circumstances of the Early Church, the life which they lived, and the growth of catholicity.

In short, S. Luke's book is a picture, and not a journalistic chronicle.

CHAPTER III

SAINTS AND HALOS

It is very difficult to see a saint without his halo. When you live with him, he does not wear a halo, and so you do not see him as a saint.

When you live centuries after him, you are unable to get a view of the saint apart from his halo.

There are saints living to-day; but they are not yet canonised, and we often fail to recognise them as such. We see their weaknesses, their faults, their mistakes (as it seems to us), but, very often, only our Master sees the halo.

Yet when we look back over the centuries, we forget that the Great Saints were regarded by their contemporaries much as present-day saints are regarded by us; and we are very apt to imagine that their halos were manifest then.

And, further, when we of the twentieth century read about the "Early Christians," we are prone to invest them *all* with halos of our own fashioning; forgetting that an Early-African convert (for instance) has no halo visible to-day.

The most difficult case is when you are a saint yourself. For your halo is liable to get tilted forwards, and it so dazzles your eyes, that you cannot see other people's halos for the glitter of your own.

The GREATEST SAINT, to His own contemporaries, wore no halo. He was thoroughly hated by some, despised by others, and often misunderstood by His own friends. So they killed Him.

In reading this book of the "Acts" we ought *first* to make an effort to see the "Early Christians" without their halos, as their own neighbours saw them.

EARLY NAMES

We shall therefore speak for the present (although it goes against the grain to do so) of Peter, and not of Saint Peter, and so forth.

Even our Blessed Lord Himself was in those days just "Joshua the Nazoræan." JESUS, the Name above all other names, was then no Sacred Name.[1] But in Judæa it was pronounced somewhat like Joshua in the Aramaic language, and Yahsous in the Greek tongue. (Just as Peter in England becomes Pierre in France, or the Hebrew Jacob becomes James in English.)

To-day when we mention the Sacred Name of JESUS, it is almost impossible to avoid associating with It the thought of Its power through the Christian centuries, and of His being VERY GOD THE SON.

That we may realise how He appeared to the people of the first century, and to exclude the experience of the Christian centuries, *but for no other purpose whatever*, we shall speak of Him by the name they applied to Him then, and by which He is named in "Acts," "Joshua the Nazoræan."

It is to be hoped that no one will suppose that this is an attempt to deprive the Great Saints of their divinely-bestowed halos.

[1] See Col. 4. 11.

But we shall see :

1. That they were men, and not super-men.
2. That the continued and continual presence of Our Lord, and of the Holy Spirit, alone can explain the subsequent growth of the Catholic Church.
3. We shall better realise their attitude,
   " Not by our power or godliness."
   " Not I, but Christ."
   " They glorified GOD (Who is) in me."
4. We shall understand that God the Holy Spirit is working His purpose out in the twentieth century through ordinary folk, such as we are.

EARLY CHRISTIANS

If we had been living in the years to which Acts **1.–12.** refer (about A.D. 29 to A.D. 46), we should never have heard the name ' Christian,' until the close of the period.[1]

There were no " Early Christians " in those days. But what sounds more startling to us now is, that there was no idea that there ever would be a religion of Christianity, such as we know it to-day.

There was a " *Chosen People*," or " *Elect People* " of JHVH. JHVH (pronounced Jehovah in English, and probably pronounced Yahweh in Hebrew), after being long recognised, by the unlearned, as the god who was worshipped by the People of Israel, and who presided over them as Baal presided over Syria, had come to be known as the only GOD Who has a real existence.

But His sympathies were still supposed by unlearned Jews (in A.D. 30) to be confined entirely to the People of Israel. A small minority of these Israelites believed

[1] Acts **11.** 26.

that JHVH had fulfilled His Promise, given again and again through His Prophets, and had sent His Promised Servant,[1] the Messiah. But all of those who believed this *were Jews*, as Joshua the Nazoræan was Himself.

If these believers spoke of ' Jews ' they included themselves. Regarded racially, there were " Jews " and " Gentiles." But regarded religiously, there were then no " Jews " and " Christians " as there are to-day.

Paul was hated, not because he was a Christian, but because, being a Jew-by-birth, he was a renegade to the Faith in most Jewish eyes, and was endeavouring to pervert the " Elect People " from their allegiance to the Law of the One JHVH.

EARLY PLACES OF WORSHIP

Further, there were no Christian-Places-of-Worship. The only places of worship for the early believers in Messiah Joshua (in Greek, Christ Jesus) were: first, the Temple in Jerusalem, and secondly, the synagogues which were numerous in Jerusalem (just as churches are in London), and which were to be found throughout the Roman Empire wherever there was a community of ten or more Jewish settlers.

The Temple was the great Jewish Cathedral at Jerusalem, where believers in JHVH met for sacrifice, and for regular Public Prayer.

The synagogues were small places where these same believers met on the Sabbath Days for prayer, reading of the Sacred Books, singing of psalms, and instruction in the Faith.

THE CHURCH

The Ecclesia (in English " The Church ") was the assembly, or congregation. This term is the translation

[1] Is. 52. 13.

of the Hebrew word usually represented in the Old Testament by "*The Congregation.*"

It might imply the whole body of believers in JHVH, in which sense it is used by Moses, and by S. Stephen in Acts **7.** 38.

It was also used to denote the ordinary congregation of a particular synagogue, as we to-day speak of "the Congregation at S. Michael's." In this sense Our Lord seems to use it in S. Matt. **18.** 17, "If he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the Church." (Tell it to the congregation of thy Synagogue.) Later on, the term is appropriated by His followers, who speak of "the Church in Jerusalem," "the Church of the Thessalonians," and, as numbers grew, "the Churches of Asia."

But Our Lord also uses the word in its former, comprehensive sense, when He says, "Upon this rock will I build MY Church" (S. Matt. **16.** 18). The old Church of the Jews is to develope into "The Church of God," "The Church of Christ," The Holy Catholic Church.

But this development is still future in A.D. 29–46.

In this comprehensive sense, the members are: "The Family of God," of whom JHVH is the Father, "The Chosen People (or Elect People) of JHVH," "The Kingdom of God" (in one sense of that phrase), "The Saints," or "The Holy Ones," as being "God's Own."[1] (Lev. **11.** 44; Ps. **31.** 23; **89.** 19; Dan. **7.** 18; etc.)

VIEWS

As in England we have those who would style themselves High Church, or Low Church, and many who

[1] Cf. "The King's Own Regiment of . . . ."

are not pronouncedly either one or the other, so in those "earliest days" there were:

A. **The Pharisees,** earnest students of the Old Testament, most scrupulous in the observance of its teaching, and of all teaching and conduct which they considered to be derived from it; Jewish puritans of a most definite type, whom we shall denominate the "Low-Jew" party, since they were devout and Bible-loving.

B. **The Sadducees,** among whom were men of broader views, who ascribed plenary inspiration to "The Law" (the Torah) only,[1] whom we may call the "Broad-Jew" party.

C. **The New Party,** in process of growth, with no distinctive name as yet, preaching "new-fangled-doctrines" (as they seemed) about the subjects of Messiah, Resurrection, Catholicity. They may be spoken of, for our present purpose, as the "High-Jew" party. Among Jews, they are styled **The Nazoræans.**

D. **"the people."** Those who have not the means, or opportunities, or inclination, for close religious study; and many of whom are contemptuously denominated by the puritan party "the sinners." Without the means whereby to purchase sacrifices, the chance of ultimate salvation for some of them is small! (S. Matt. **19.** 25.)

X. Some minor groups, such as Essenes, and Zealots.

Z. **The Samaritans.** The Non-Conformists[2] of that day. Carrying on their own services, in their own temple at Gerizzim, with their own particular copy of "The Law"; they are anathematised by all the parties A, B, C, D, X; counted by many as somewhat worse than the heathen, much as Non-Conformists and Roman Catholics were in England in the latter part of the

[1] See p. 9. [2] See, further, p. 177.

seventeenth century. It is one of these despised believers in JHVH whom Our Lord takes as His model to paint one of His most beautiful pictures.[1]

These 'Dissenters,' however, are not mingled by residence with A, B, C, D, X; but inhabit the country lying between the two tracts of Judæa and Galilee, where A, B, C, D, have their homes.

The Low-Jew party was the one which received the severest castigation from the lips of Our Lord. This was probably because among them a real attempt at true worship of God was found; and He saw how their faults (not evident to themselves) were nullifying their well-meant efforts. It must, however, be clearly stated that in using a modern terminology, the editor does not mean that the old Jewish parties were in any sense on parallel lines with High, Low, and Broad Church Christian divisions. It is purely a matter of nomenclature, used in order to get away from what Oliver Wendell Holmes calls the " polarised " use of the words Pharisee, Sadducee, etc. But it would be possible to find likenesses to (let us say) the Pharisees of the first century A.D., among Romanists, Anglicans, or Protestants.

GOVERNMENT

The government of the country in the first century was chiefly in the hands of the Broad-Jew party, to which most of the priests then belonged. They probably had a majority in the Sanhedrin, or 'High Court' of The Nation, and it was chiefly they who brought about the crucifixion of Our Lord. This was partly on political grounds, because they thought that He was aiming at a kingship, which would bring them into conflict with the

[1] The Good Samaritan.

Roman Emperor; and partly on account of His interference with the profits of their business in the Outer Court of the Temple.[1]

THE HIGH-JEWS

We may trace in S. Luke's Book the evolution of the name by which the High-Jew party was to be known.

At first "the disciples," or "those who believed" is sufficient; for their great hope is that the whole Nation will accept their testimony as to The Resurrection.

As the numbers grow, they tend to become a community or congregation distinct from those of the Jews who will not receive their witness, and they speak of themselves as "The Church," or as members of the Churches.

By outsiders they are spoken of as "the Way" (or the Sect) of the Nazoræans, and apparently are regarded merely as one of the "denominations" of the Jewish Church.

Later on we find "the saints" (God's Own), the title which they use among themselves; and after Gentiles are admitted, the *Jewish* adherents to the new Faith are styled "they-of-the-Circumcision."

Later still we find many of these latter forming a distinct party *within* the Christian Church; and in modern times 'the Judaizers' is the term which is given to them. These 'Judaizers' are strongly opposed to S. Paul's teaching.

CHRISTIANS

The term Christian was at first a mere nick-name given to the believers by outsiders, as recorded in Acts 11. 26. (The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.)

[1] See Plan of The Temple, facing p. 75.

It occurs in two other passages only of the New Testament ; once when used sneeringly by Agrippa (Acts **26.** 28), and for the third and last time in 1 Pet. **4.** 16, where the Apostle speaks of the sufferings inflicted by enemies of The Faith.

Acts **11.** 26 is no casual remark. Henceforth the believers in Joshua the Nazoræan were members of a new religion, though they hardly recognised the fact as yet. Gradually, even those believers who were Jews-by-birth, became conscious of their new religious outlook, and ceased to consider themselves, or to be looked upon, as Jews-by-religion.

But it is most important, for the right understanding of S. Luke's book, to bear constantly in mind that in the period A.D. 29–46, all believers in JHVH, whether they believe in the Resurrection or not, are *all Jews*.

The High-Jews believe that Messiah has come, the Low-Jews believe (as still in 1925), that He is yet to come. All are in the ' Family of God,' admitted by circumcision.

S. Mark, a Jew, writing his Gospel in these earliest days, speaks of the opposition to Our Lord shown by " the Pharisees," or " the Scribes," but he can never speak of it as shown by " the Jews," of which nation he is a member. Just as an M.P. of 1925 may speak bitterly of ' the Tories,' or ' the Socialists,' but he cannot write or speak of the opposition of ' the English ' to his policy.

When, therefore, we meet constantly the expression " the Jews " in S. John's Gospel (**2.** 6, 13, 18, 20 ; **3.** 1, etc.), a book written by a man of Jewish birth, we realise that we are in another atmosphere, of later date.

By this time (about A.D. 90) there are " Jews " and " Christians," from a religious point of view. And the Jewish Nation has so definitely rejected the Messianic

teaching, that S. John has almost forgotten that he was once a Jew-by-religion. Probably he never was a Pharisee.

Even S. Paul himself, in his Second Letter to Corinth, drops into this expression " the Jews " once (2 Cor. **11.** 24). And that, strangely enough, after he has just been emphasising his position as a Hebrew, an Israelite, a lineal descendant of Abraham. Two verses later he substitutes " my countrymen."

On the contrary, S. Luke in his Gospel, although he is a Gentile, never makes a slip by speaking of Our Lord's opponents as " the Jews," as a writer of the second century would be almost certain to do.

He tells Theophilus (in S. Luke **7.** 3) about the " elders of the Jews," because at the time of his writing there were " elders of the Christians " also ; and in S. Luke **23.** 51, he mentions that Arimathea is a Jewish city.

But when we open our concordance, look under the word " Jews," and see the large number of times that it occurs in S. John's Gospel, we cannot fail to be struck with S. Luke's avoidance of the literary pitfall which lay in his path, as a Gentile.

Note also that in Acts " Jews " occurs seven times only in Chaps. **1–11**, when there were only High-Jews and the other sects, and sixty-five times in Chaps. **12–28**, when there were " Christians " and " Jews."

THE FAMILY OF GOD

But for the rejection of the claims of Our Lord by the Jewish Nation, and the guidance of S. Paul by the Holy Spirit, in all probability our infants to-day (being Gentiles) would be admitted into the (Jewish) Family of God by circumcision and baptism at the hands of a Jewish

Rabbi. They might then be baptised a second time as Christians for the remission of sins.

But through the insistence of the great Apostle to the Gentiles, we are freed from circumcision and the observance of the oppressive minutiæ of "the Law"; and for us there is "One Baptism," as there is "One Lord" and "One Faith," and by "One Spirit" we are made members of the "One Body," which is the Family of the "One God and Father of all." [1]

This Family is the Communion of the Saints, of which we are members now as the disciples were in the first century. But neither we nor they wear halos among our own contemporaries.

LUKE, THE GENTILE

One of the saints of those earliest days was this man called Luke. No one called him Saint Luke. If they had, he would have been as much surprised as your neighbour Mrs. Smith would be, if you called her Saint Smith. (She may be one of the saints, all the same.) A saint, according to New Testament usage, is a baptised believer.

Luke did not know that he was a SAINT. We may doubt whether he would have regarded himself as a historian. He knew that he was a physician, because that was his trade. To-day, probably, his practice as a physician would be lamentably small, for he was not a great physician, and neither he nor any other of the same profession in those days knew much about medicine really.

A man named Paul knew that he was a really good friend and comrade, and Luke could see something of Paul's halo.

Luke is a Gentile, who believes that Joshua the

[1] Eph. 4. 4–6.

Nazoræan is the Messiah of the Jews. These Jews **are** "The Family of God." This fact has been hammered into the mind of the race during the past 1,300 years. Moses told them, "*I am* JHVH, *your* GOD; *Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me from among all peoples; Thou shalt make no covenant with other nations*," etc. "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate," was Isaiah's word as quoted by S. Paul in 2 Cor. **6.** 17. And since the times of Ezra and Nehemiah they had obeyed this teaching, and had kept themselves separate from the nations of the world.

They have been so kept, further, for the next 1,900 years.

But now, in A.D. 30, the Apostles (all of Jewish birth and religion) have been told that we Gentiles are to be admitted. Not into a Christian Church (the name does not yet exist); but 'The Family' is to admit us. It is a tremendous concession, and to many minds a dangerous step, which is contrary to the teaching of Moses and the Prophets.

But with due precaution, and if we come as humble suppliants, some of the great Jewish Family of God are ready to take these outcasts in, on terms which The Family will impose.

But Luke has been received, through the Christian Paul, as though he were on an equality, in the sight of God, with the "Elect" of The Family.

LUKE, THE AUTHOR

Luke has decided to write an account of some events of the years since 4 B.C. for the benefit of a friend, His Excellency, Governor Theophilus. He has completed, and sent, the first volume, and now (probably about

A.D. 60) is writing the second, with possibly a third to follow.[1]

For many centuries since this literary effort, Luke was regarded as a historian of credit.

Then, about a century ago, certain scholars discovered facts, and decided that he was inaccurate and unreliable, and a mere patchwork-editor.

To-day, largely owing to the researches of Sir William Ramsay, we find that certain of the scholars of the nineteenth century are the uninformed and unreliable persons, and that Luke was a *great* historian.

He had, as he tells us in that perfectly expressed piece of Greek prose, S. Luke 1. 1–4, "traced the course of all things accurately, from their beginning, that he might write in order." He never uses words in a slip-shod fashion, but selects the correct word unfailingly, to express what is in his mind. Writing, as he does, to an educated man, he sometimes expresses by a single word,[2] a thought which would need elaboration into a sentence for readers of lower literary attainment.

Furthermore, he has lived in Palestine for two years with the characters of his history, and for many years with Paul, the prominent character, so he writes at first-hand, not second-hand.

LIVING IN THE EARLY DAYS

We are now about to try to live with him, during those early days, seeing what he saw, hearing as he heard, feeling as his contemporaries felt.

This effort will entail on us the surmounting of two great difficulties, and the correction of two mistakes which arise from within our own minds.

[1] It is not unlikely that martyrdom prevented this.
[2] See also, pp. 199, 205, 211.

First, we are apt to make the mistake of keeping in our view our own circumstances and knowledge when reading the history of 1,900 years ago.

Second, we are apt to make the mistake of *not* applying our own experience and knowledge to the consideration of the history of 1,900 years ago.

And very often we make both mistakes simultaneously. We do *not* forget our personal experience and knowledge when they ought to be forgotten; and we overlook them when they ought to be remembered.

Speaking in very general terms; in matters which deal with faith, we ought to forget the teaching we have acquired from the past nineteen centuries; and in matters of action and conduct, we ought to bear in mind the experience of our own lives to-day.

We shall try to see the saints of old without their halos, as their own friends saw them; with the full confidence that when we view this picture once more, at our own distance from it, these halos will have gained, for us, a brightness that we never saw so clearly before.

CHAPTER IV

METHOD

In the numerous transcriptions of S. Luke's literary work, which have been made during the years A.D. 60–1900, there have occurred :—

(*a*) **slips** of copyists,

(*b*) **emendations** of the text by those who either thought they could improve on the author's language, or thought that they were correcting the faults of earlier editors,

(*c*) **incorporations** of explanatory words, or marginal notes, made by copyists or readers, into the original text.

It is most important for us of the twentieth century to bear in mind that no First-Century-Christians would have more veneration for S. Luke's work than we have to-day for the work of a modern great scholar.

It was not until a later period that the Holy Spirit guided the Church to give it a place equal or superior to the Sacred Writings of the Old Testament and finally to bind it up in " The Bible."

By careful and pains-taking comparisons, carried on by great scholars for many years, between the most Ancient Manuscripts now existing (usually denoted by the letters A, B, C, D, etc.) and copies or translations of later dates, nearly all these slips, emendations, and

annotations have been removed; and scholars who are qualified to judge have arrived at what we may believe to be a nearly perfect transcript of S. Luke's original words.

For the closer consideration of the points on which there is still a difference of opinion among scholars, our readers must be referred to the great commentaries of to-day; as the scope of our work will not allow us to do more than select what appears to us to be the most probable opinion.

TRANSLATION OF THE TEXT

In translations authorised by the Church for English readers, it is manifestly necessary that we should have an accurate verbal rendering of Greek words into English words. But as this book is intended for those who do not understand Greek, this accurate verbal rendering will sometimes be replaced by English idiom. Just as we should translate "Comment vous portez-vous?" by "How do you do?" rather than "How do you carry yourself?"

Since the year A.D. 100 (or thereabouts) the Three Orders of Ministry in the Church have been Bishops, Priests and Deacons. These words are Greek in origin, their previous forms being Episcopos (Episcop, Biscop, Bishop); Presbyteros (Presbyter, Prester, Prest, Priest) [1]; and Diaconos (Diacon, Deacon). In order that the reader may have some realisation of the origin of the titles of the Three Orders, in our translation we shall use the words episcopate, bishopric, presbyters, diaconate, deaconing, etc., wherever the corresponding Greek words

[1] This purely Christian title has unfortunately been given to members of Jewish, and heathen, hierarchies.

occur. But it is important to bear in mind that in these years A.D. 29–46, these Three Orders did not yet exist. The only ' clergy ' were The Apostles.

The New Testament text in English version is indicated in the following pages by the Roman lettering here exhibited, but indented.

Quotations from the Old Testament are in italics.

Our present division into chapters was made in A.D. 1238, and the division into verses in A.D. 1551.

In the pages which follow, a different division of chapters is adopted, and the old division, necessary for reference to our Bibles, is placed in the margins.

LIST OF TERMS

It will be convenient to collect here a list of terms, which will be used in the chapters which follow; with some explanation of them.

Joshua the Nazoræan. He Whom we now call Our Lord, Jesus Christ. God the Son, Incarnate in human flesh.

Israelites. Descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God's Elect People, worshippers of JHVH. They speak of themselves as " The Nation."

Judæans, or **Hebrews.** Israelites whose home is in Judæa.

Galileans. Israelites whose home is in Galilee.

Hellenists. Israelites whose homes are in various countries outside of Palestine. Often spoken of as " The Dispersion," or " The Diaspora," or " those-scattered-abroad." (Jas. 1. 1.)

Jews. At first,

All who belong to any of the above classes.

Later,

Those who cling steadfastly to the Old Worship and oppose the Christian teaching and religion.

Low-Jews. The Pharisee party (see p. 23).

Broad-Jews. The Sadducee party.

High-Jews. Those who believe that Joshua the Nazoræan is Messiah. Variously called in Acts 1.–12., "the disciples," "the believers," "the brethren," and, after a time, "the saints."

Those-of-the-circumcision. Believers in Messiah Joshua who are Jews-by-birth. This term comes into use after the admission of Gentile converts.

Judaizers. Believers in Messiah Joshua, who are Jews-by-birth *and who are opposed* to the admission of Gentiles on the terms proposed by S. Paul; and who strongly deny many of his doctrines.

Apostles. In Acts 1.–12., the twelve men, to whom is al-lot-ted (Greek, cleros[1]=lot) the headship of the High-Jews. In later times others, as S. Paul, received the title.

The multitude.
The rest.
The residue.
} All other High-Jews, except the Apostles. In later phraseology, the Christian Laity.

The Sanhedrin. The High-Court-of-Justice of the Jews. This consisted of seventy-two members, meeting in the Sanhedrin-Hall, with the High-Priest as president. They were not allowed to carry out a sentence of death without its confirmation by the Roman Procurator, or Governor.

Judaism. The religion of all Israelites; the main article of whose creed was the Worship of One JHVH.

[1] From which are derived the words clergy, clerk, clerical. See pp. 49, 50.

Aramaic. The language (akin to Ancient Hebrew) which was generally spoken by Judæans and Galileans. The latter spoke it with an audible "accent." [1]

Greek. The language spoken in the first century by most educated men throughout the Civilised World, whatever their native language might be. Also, the native language of the people in Greece, Macedonia, and parts of Asia Minor.

Gentiles. The name given by Israelites to all who were not of their own race and religion.

Proselytes. Gentiles who had been admitted by the Jewish Priesthood into the Jewish community, by circumcision and baptism.

The People.
The Nation. } The Chosen People of God. All Israel.

the people. The "lower orders."

The peoples. The Gentile World.

Presbyters. The 'elder' men, to whom naturally fell the positions of eminence among the Israelites; and to whom the term 'Senators' might be sometimes applied. Later on in the history, an 'order' of the Christian Ministry.

Scribes or **Lawyers.** Israelites whose business it was to copy the Sacred Books, and to expound them to such as came to them for instruction and advice.

Rabbi. A scholar, well versed in all that appertained to Jewish religion, and who was accepted as a qualified teacher.

Rabban. A Rabbi, who was pre-eminent among Rabbis.

The inestimable value of this Book of S. Luke to the Christian Church, giving as it does an account of those

[1] S. Matt. 26. 73.

Early Days of Christianity, may be best appreciated when we ask for a history of Christians during the years A.D. 60–100. We shall find hardly anything but a bare statement of their existence, and of the efforts made to destroy them. Their persecutors destroyed every Christian book on which they could lay their hands.

"The Acts of the Apostles" is our sole historical record of the previous thirty years; and but for this work there would be nothing of historical Christian authority for that period, save such scraps of history as could have been collected from the letters of S. Paul.

BOOK I

THE EARLIEST DAYS

GROWTH OF APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY

CHAPTER A (A.D. 29)

CONTINUATION OF LUKE'S FIRST VOLUME[1]

1. 1 The First Treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all things that Joshua began both to do and to teach [a work now continued by
2 Him through others], until the day on which, after giving orders [for this continuance] through the HOLY SPIRIT to the Apostles whom He had chosen, He was received up [for His Enthronement].[2]

3 To them also He shewed Himself living,
After His [life's-]suffering,
In many positive-proofs.
Appearing-in-vision to them during forty days, and giving them instructions about
The Kingdom of God.

Luke at once strikes two dominant notes of his book:

The unseen power is THE HOLY SPIRIT;
The visible authority is vested in The Apostles.

Further, the first work of the Apostles is to proclaim the Resurrection, and the establishment of that Kingdom whose King was first enthroned on the Cross.

4 At one meeting with them, He charged them not to depart from Jerusalem [to Galilee again][3]

[1] Now called "The Gospel according to S. Luke."
[2] Ps. **24.** 7–10.
[3] S. Matt. **28.** 16.

But to wait for the Promise of The Father, which (said He) ye heard from Me.

5 For John indeed baptised with water, but ye shall be baptised in HOLY SPIRIT, not many days hence.

The first announcement of The Kingdom was made by John the Baptist, who baptised in the Jordan, that he might teach his countrymen to cleanse themselves from sin [1] so as to be ready to meet the King.

Now that the King has been proclaimed,[2] crowned, and enthroned on earth in scorn, and is about to be enthroned in Heaven, in Glory, His earthly Ministers of State must receive the greater Baptism in HOLY SPIRIT. [But this is a twentieth-century point of view.]

THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL

6 So, at a later gathering, they were asking Him, saying,

Lord, is this the time when Thou wilt restore the kingdom to Israel?

Two questions: Is it now? Is it to Israel?

Of the many questions which we may suppose were asked of Him during those forty days, why does Luke single out this one?

Because this is the question to which the whole Book of "The Acts of the Apostles" is an answer.

Here we have the Problem-of-the-First-Century in the germ.

For generations, the Israelites had been hoping for

[1] Luke 3. 3.

[2] By the representative of Rome, the Capital of the World. S. John 19. 19–22.

the restoration of their kingdom as it was in the golden days of David and Solomon.

Prophets had assured them that the Great King would come. At last John the Baptist told them that the Kingdom was at hand.[1] Joshua the Nazoræan proclaimed the same fact.[2] He constantly taught the Truths about the Kingdom in His Parables, and, as constantly, even His nearest friends failed to understand, because their minds were too pre-occupied with their own ingrained ideas. Efforts were made from time to time to compel the Lord Joshua to head a revolution, and seize the throne.[3] At last He entered Jerusalem in the midst of a shouting, cheering crowd, who looked for the overthrow of the Roman power forthwith.

His best friends were applying in person, with their mother to help their suit, for the position of Chief Ministers of State.[4] The Jewish Government was almost in despair, knowing well how hopeless it was for such a mob to stand against the Roman armies; and that nothing less than annihilation of the Jewish Nation was to be apprehended if the insurrection occurred.[5]

At the Passover, when The XIII were supping together (little did they think it was the last supper for them with their Master!), they were quarrelling about their relative precedence in the coming Royal Court.[6]

And then the all-but King, after telling them that legions of angels [7] were at His call if He chose to call for them, but also telling again and again into deaf ears that He would be crucified; tamely, as it seemed to His friends, refused to make an effort, or to allow them to strike a blow for Him [8]; was publicly condemned to

[1] S. Matt. **3.** 2.
[2] S. Matt. **4.** 17, 23.
[3] S. John **6.** 15; **12.** 13.
[4] S. Matt. **20.** 20.
[5] S. John **11.** 48.
[6] S. Luke **22.** 24.
[7] S. Matt. **26.** 53.
[8] S. Matt. **26.** 52.

death, and *that*, without even an unsuccessful grasp at power.

Was not Peter's denial a most natural, inevitable thing to expect? His hopes, cherished and growing for three years, were shattered, and **by his Master** . . . the Master at Whose side he would gladly have died fighting to the last gasp. Peter was no coward. It was bitterest resentment against the betrayal of his own hopes, as he thought it, not cowardice, which made him with oaths declare that he never knew *this* man, who would not even speak a word, let alone strike a blow, for himself and his devoted followers.

But one glance from those sad loved eyes, dispels the fierce resentment on the instant, and he goes out into the friendly darkness to sob out from his heart all the agonising shattering of every hope in life.

The women went on "the-third-day-after" to the tomb, to pay their last sad tribute of respect, in the early dawn, before their enemies were about; and returned with the startling announcement that it was empty. The events of the next six weeks are scantily summarised by Luke in "Acts," in verse 3 above.

Once more the hope of "The Kingdom" is revived, but still the Apostles cannot realise its true scope. Do we wonder why they were so "slow of heart"? (S. Luke **24.** 25.) Do not be too astonished to find that HE did not convert Caiaphas!

Ask yourself, Most Excellent, how long time it would require for Rabbi Gamaliel to convert you from your present beliefs, backed up by nineteen centuries of Christianity, about "The Kingdom of God," to a belief that the phrase means the establishment of a new Great-World-Power under a Jewish King in Jerusalem. And then invert the process, and ask yourself:

Whence came the power by which Rabbi Joshua the Nazoræan, in so short a time, revolutionised the views of these eleven men and many others, backed up as they were by centuries of Judaism, and of prophetic teaching?

Is it entirely a matter for surprise that Zionism is yet hoping to see such a "Great Power" established, and that still to-day many Christians look for it?

The King *was* enthroned, and *that* at Jerusalem.

But, just as GOD THE SON lived on earth at Nazareth for thirty years, unknown and unnoticed by all the world; so His Kingdom for some thirty years more is recognised by neither Jews nor Gentiles.

A new Jewish sect has sprung up. Nothing more. The attitude of Gallio (Acts **18.** 14, 15) is Luke's graphic sketch of the attitude of the whole world, absolutely ignorant of the Advent of the Kingdom already in their midst.

"The Acts of the Apostles" is the "Gospel of THE HOLY SPIRIT, according to Paul, through Luke to the Gentiles."

And it narrates also, alas, the answer of the Jewish Nation to the Apostles' question.

Israel **refuses to accept** the Kingdom.

It is not consistent with their ideas.

"We will not have this man to reign over us." [1]

Let him that is without imperfect views among us Christians cast (not the first stone, but) the multi-millionth at them!

The King makes no move for the avenging of His own murder. GOD had come to "His Own," and they had received Him not. The offer of complete amnesty is made; and punishment is delayed, until they themselves

[1] S. Luke 19. 14.

bring down the ruin of their own Temple and City on their own heads.

It will be a hard enough task for His friends to go to the murderers with the offer of full and immediate pardon. Did they know the answer which is to be forthcoming, the task would be super-human, and impossible. For the present, " their eyes " must " be holden."

7 It is not for you [as yet], He said to them, to know times or seasons, which THE FATHER appointed by His own authority.

But the Kingdom is established, and

8 You shall receive power [in it] when THE HOLY SPIRIT comes upon you, and you will be MY Testimony-Bearers
(1) In Jerusalem,
(2) In Judæa [Acts **5.** 16 marks this],
(3) In Samaria [Acts **8.** 5],
(4) To the farthest bound of the earth [Acts **13.** 2].

They did receive the power, and they used it. Our ' Book I ' is the story of the growth of this Apostolic Power in the Apostolic Church. It grew because they strove to use it, and the twentieth century acknowledges its potency.

Did not you, Most Excellent Reader, receive power when you received the Holy Spirit? Did it seem of such insignificant dimensions that it was not worth the will-effort required to use it? Carry your mind a little farther back than it can reach, to babyhood, and believe that then, with life God gave you power, infantile though it was; that you used that infantile power, with all your baby-might, and that it went on growing.

Apply this experience to the other Spirit-Power.

THE EVENT

9 And as He was speaking thus, as they were looking,
He was taken up, and a cloud obscured Him
from their eyes.
10 And as they were gazing into the sky, at Him
going, behold further, two men [1] in white
apparel are standing by them,
11 And these men said, Galileans, why stand ye
looking into the sky?
This same Joshua, who is received up from you
into the heaven, shall so come in like manner
as ye beheld him going into the heaven.
[He is not lost to you, nor supplanted by THE
HOLY SPIRIT.]

THE CIRCUMSTANCES FOLLOWING THE EVENT

12 Then they returned into Jerusalem from a mount
called (The Mount) of Olives,
Which [my Theophilus] is near Jerusalem, about
a Sabbath-day's journey [2] distant.
13 And when they arrived, they went up to the
upper chamber [of which I told you [3]], and
where they were still staying, both
Peter and John and James and Andrew,
Philip and Thomas,
Bartholomew, and Matthew,
James (son) of Alphæus, and Simon the Zealot,
and Judas (son) of James.
14 All of these were [for the next few days] engaging
regularly together in the praying along with
Women,
Mary the Mother of Joshua, and with
His brethren [Jacob, Joseph, Judah, and Simeon].

[1] These men may have been Moses and Elijah.
[2] *I.e.* about a mile. [3] S. Luke 22. 12.

The full list of the Apostles is given again, although Theophilus has been told their names already (S. Luke **6.** 13–16), because this ' Book I ' narrates their rise to pre-eminence. Luke, the admirer of Paul, will give The Twelve their full meed, although (or because) they are ignorantly supposed to be opposed to Paul.

We note here also an " Inner Circle " around the Apostles, and an " Outer Multitude " of High-Jews.

Here also, and throughout the Book, we shall find Luke indicating the important position occupied in The Church by women. To him, as a Greek, it would be startling. In the twentieth century (alas) some men think the Christian Religion a concern for women and children only. GOD, Who gave to man his logic, his reason, his force, gave to woman her instinct, her intuition, her charm. And Christ has made them one.

We shall notice Luke's method in these early pages, of describing (1) ' The Event,' and (2) ' The Circumstances consequent on the Event ' ; the latter marked by his careful use of the Imperfect Tense.

THE PLACE OF JUDAS

15 On an occasion during those [ten] days, Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren
(The number of names was about 120 altogether), and said,
16 Brethren, the Scripture had to be full-filled, which THE HOLY SPIRIT spoke before through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who was guide to those who apprehended Joshua.

Peter quotes the Old Testament Scriptures, evidently without feeling any break with the religion in which he has always been brought up. God has not, even now,

cast away " His People," but is ready to increase their numbers, through the work of these 120 High-Jews, and their successors.

17 For he was one who had been numbered among us, and received the cleros (lot) of this deaconing.[1]

18 Now this man [my Theophilus] acquired a field from pay-for-the-iniquity [of which I told you[2]]; and falling from a height, he burst asunder (screamed out) in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.

And it became known to all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch that in their (Aramaic) dialect [Luke spoke Greek], that field was since called Akeldama, that is, The field of blood.

It is not improbable that the compound verb which S. Matthew uses (S. Matt. 27. 5), implies that Judas threw himself from a cliff. No rope is mentioned. He had bargained for the field, but had not handed over the money, or received the title-deeds. In his desperation, he flung down the money in the Temple Court. It was picked up, taken to the High Priests, and they completed the purchase of the land.

20 For it hath been written in the *Book of Psalms*,
Let his night-abode be made desolate,
And let no man dwell therein.
And
His bishopric[3] *let another take.*

21 Of the men therefore who have accompanied us, all the time that the Lord Joshua went in and went out at our head, beginning from the
22 baptising of John, up to the day on which

[1] See p. 33. [2] S. Luke 22. 5. [3] See p. 33.

He was received up from us, one of these must become a Testimony-Bearer of His resurrection, along with us.

THE CLEROS, OR LOT

We note the tacit assumptions of Peter :

(1) That the Apostles have a special " cleros " (lot) [1] (from which word is derived ' the clergy ') [2] among the brethren ;

(2) That their number must be 12.

Did not the Lord Joshua say, " Ye shall sit on 12 thrones, judging the 12 tribes of Israel ? "

He may be expected to return any day as Emperor, and then his 12 Kings will be ready.

Further, John the Baptist had been the first to announce that His Kingdom was at hand.

23 And they put forward two,
Joseph, called the son of Sabba, who was surnamed " the Just,"
And Matthias.
And they prayed, and said
24 Thou, O Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men,
Declare of these two, the one whom thou didst
25 choose to take the place of this diaconate and apostolate, from which Judas fell away, to go to his own place.
26 And they gave lots [cleros] for them,
And the cleros fell on Matthias,
And he was numbered with the (other) eleven apostles.

To whom is this prayer addressed ? To the Father, or to the Lord Joshua ? Probably, from the phrasing,

[1] Cf. Deut. 10. 9 ; Joshua 21. 4–8. [2] See p. 35.

to Our Lord. Perhaps we may say that at this time they recognised His Divinity, though S. Stephen was probably the first who clearly saw His Deity.

THE PICTURE DRAWN

(*a*) Be ready, and wait.
(*b*) The Apostles assume the lead, and give command.

CHAPTER B (A.D. 29, 30)

THE BIRTH OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

THE EVENT

2. 1 And when the Day of Pentecost was now full-filled,

As the offering of the lamb of Passover was filled-full in the Offering of the Lamb of God,[1] so the old Judaic Pentecost is now filled-full in the great Day of THE HOLY SPIRIT. So, throughout the whole narrative of Acts, the Jewish Church of God dissolves into the world-wide Church of the same God, a process occupying some thirty-five to sixty years. No exact line of division can be drawn.

They [the twelve apostles] were all gathered together in one place.

[Probably " the Upper Room."]

2 And suddenly there came from the sky a roaring as of the rushing of a strong gale, and it filled all the house where they were seated.

3 And there appeared unto them forked tongues, like as of flames of fire, and it sat upon each one of them.

4 And they were all filled with HOLY SPIRIT, and began to speak with other tongues as THE SPIRIT was giving them (power) to speak out plainly.

[1] S. John 1. 29 ; 1 Cor. 5. 7.

5 Now there were Jews, staying at Jerusalem [for the feast],
Good Jew-churchmen,
From every nation of folk under the heaven.
6 And when this sound happened,
The crowd collected, and was massed together,
So that each one heard them (the Apostles) speaking in his own language.
7 And they were in amazement, and were wondering, saying,
Behold, are not all these men who are speaking, Galileans?
8 And how is it that we are each one hearing in our own dialect, which we have used from birth?
[From whatever part of the world we come],
11 we are hearing them speaking in our tongues the mighty works of God.

THE ADVENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Had Luke written after the fashion of the last three lines above, his language (although giving an accurate epitome of what was actually being said) would have been far too weak for this epoch-making event. Let us pause to gaze on its greatness, to which The Incarnation only can afford a parallel. As that was the Advent of GOD THE SON, so this is the Advent of GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT. Luke's account of the first of these Advents occupies **1.** 26 to **2.** 40 of his Gospel. That was the birth of GOD THE SON in human flesh; this is the birth of the World-wide Church; and both are wrought through the overshadowing of THE HOLY SPIRIT.[1] In both cases, neither friends nor foes, neither

[1] S. Luke **1.** 35.

relatives nor strangers, understand "what manner of child this shall be"; nor will they, during the period of growth which Luke records, until the time comes that the child comes to be "about 30 years of age."[1]

Luke (writing some thirty years after this Day of Pentecost) manifestly regards this unique event as a clear foreshadowing by THE HOLY SPIRIT that the Gospel is to be preached to every nation; and in his Book this Catholic birth must be clearly and strongly marked.

Devout wise men from the East, and North, and South, and West, are present; and

9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites,[2]
Those who inhabit Mesopotamia and Judæa and Cappadocia,
Pontus and the (Province of) Asia
10 Both Phrygia and Pamphylia
Egypt, and the parts of Libya-about-Cyrene,
Sojourners who are Romans,
Both Jews and proselytes,
11 Cretans and Arabians, all we
Are hearing them speaking in our own tongues the mighty works of God.

THE NEW-BORN CHILD

The world-wide folk actually present at the birth of this "child of God" are either relatives (Jews) or connections (proselytes), but when Luke writes his book he knows that "*many more shall be the children of her that was desolate, than of her who hath had an husband.*"

Yet this child is the child of Jerusalem.

Despite her personal spiritual uncleanliness, Jerusalem has for the last four hundred years[3] been faithful as a

[1] S. Luke 3. 23. [2] See Map, facing p. 133.
[3] Since the time of Ezra.

spouse to JHVH; the power of THE HOLY SPIRIT has overshadowed her, and the holy thing that is this day born of her shall be called the Holy Church of God.

Can a woman's tender care
Cease towards the child she bare?
Alas!
Judæa will forgetful be,
Yet
The Father will remember thee.

Luke will tell us how she proves an unkind mother; and nineteen Christian centuries now tell how brutally the child has treated the mother who gave it birth.

THE RESULT OF THE EVENT

12 They were all amazed, and were quite at a loss,
Saying one to another,
What can this be?
13 But others, jeering, were saying
They are filled with new wine.

The foreign-speaking Jews are under no misapprehension; for they understand the words they hear, and can discuss the occurrence with one another. But the Aramaic-speaking crowd of Jerusalem, who know no other language, quite naturally suggest the explanation which rises to their mind, as they hear what seems to them mere 'jabbering.'

Galilee lies on what was then a network of routes from all nations of the world. All Galilean children constantly heard various foreign languages spoken by travellers. Is it possible that we have here a divine quickening of what we speak of now as 'the subconscious mind'? Perhaps the foreign words which they heard from strangers in their childhood, had remained printed on their subconscious minds, although their working

minds had forgotten them. So far as we can perceive, God always works by means. Some we call natural, others appear to us super-natural.[1] This event may be an accelerated and highly-charged form of what we are now beginning to learn is a natural mental process. But whether it be this, or a notable miracle passing our comprehension, it is the " wonderful work of God."

As Peter points out, the suggestion of drunkenness is absurd, for no Jew would think of breaking his fast before about 10 a.m. on the Great Day of Pentecost.

THE SERMON

14 But Peter stood up with The Eleven,
Lifted up his voice, and spoke out plainly [see v. 4] to them,
Judæans,[2] and all dwellers at Jerusalem,
Be this known unto you, and give ear unto my words.

15 For these men are not drunken, as ye are supposing, for it is (but) the third hour of the day [that is, about 9 a.m.] ;

16 But this (event) is a fill-full-ment of that which hath been spoken through the Prophet Joel,[3]

THE DAY OF THE SPIRIT

17 *And it shall be* in the last days, saith God,
I pour forth of My Spirit upon all flesh :
And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
And your young men shall be see visions,
And your old men shall dream dreams :

[1] A better word would be alter-natural, *i.e.* of-other-nature. Then :—natural=God's work perceived by bodily senses; alter-natural=God's work as yet imperfectly perceived; super-natural=That which is of Divine Nature. But see later, p. 315.

[2] See p. 34. [3] Joel 2. 28–32.

18 *Yea, and upon my bond-servants, and upon my bond-maidens*
In those days will I pour forth from My Spirit,
And they shall prophesy.
19 *And I will give wonders in the heaven* above,
And signs *on the earth* beneath,
Blood and fire and vapour of smoke ;
20 *The sun shall be turned into darkness,*
And the moon into blood,
Before The Day of THE LORD *come,*
The great and notable (*day*)
21 *And it shall be, that whosoever shall call on the Name of* THE LORD *shall be saved.*

In verse 20, Joel's reference is probably to eclipses of the sun and moon.

" THE LORD " is the expression used by devout Jews, who are unwilling to pronounce the Sacred Name JHVH.

Thus far, Peter has been speaking mainly to Palestinian Jews. He now addresses all, whether Palestinians or Hellenists.[1]

THE RETURN FROM HADES

22 **Israelites,** hear these words,
Joshua the Nazoræan, a man approved by God unto you, by powers, and wonders, and signs, which God wrought through Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves know,
23 Him, being betrayed by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of GOD
[Declared aforetime by the Prophets],
Ye, by the hand of men-outside-The-Law [Roman soldiers],
Did fix to the cross and lift up ;

[1] See p. 34.

24 Whom GOD raised up,
Having loosed the pangs of death,
Because it was not possible that He should be holden by it.
25 For David saith unto Him,[1]
I behold THE LORD *always before my face ;*
For He is on my right-hand that I should not be moved :
26 *Therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced ;*
Moreover my flesh also shall tabernacle in hope,
27 *Because Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades,*
Neither will Thou give Thy Holy One to see corruption.
28 *Thou madest known to me the ways of life.*
Thou shalt make me full of gladness with Thy Presence.

This section of the speech may be briefly summarised : Joshua the Nazoræan full-fills prophecy (or, fills up prophecy to the full), therefore He is Messiah.

Peter feels that he has his audience with him, in his appeal, based so entirely on their Sacred Books.

He therefore proceeds,

JOSHUA IS MESSIAH

29 **Brothers,**
I may speak to you freely [for you will all agree]
Concerning the patriarch David,
That he both died and was buried, and that his tomb is with us unto this day.
30 Being therefore a Prophet, and knowing that God
Swore with an oath to him,
That one of his lineal descendants should sit upon his throne ;

[1] Ps. 16. 8.

31 He, foreseeing, spoke concerning the Resurrection
of the Messiah,
That neither was He left (forsaken) in Hades,
Nor did His Flesh *see corruption.*

(For His Flesh was in the tomb only from Friday night to Sunday morning.)

32 This Joshua did God raise up,
Of whom all we [the Apostles] are the Testimony-Bearers.
33 Being therefore now exalted at the right-hand of GOD,
And having received from THE FATHER the promise of THE HOLY SPIRIT,
HE poured forth this, which you are seeing and hearing.
34 For David did not ascend into the heavens,
But he saith himself,
THE LORD (JHVH) *said unto my Lord,*
Sit Thou on MY *right hand,*
35 *Till I make Thine enemies the footstool of Thy Feet.*

The doctrine of the HOLY TRINITY cannot yet be publicly proclaimed, but the germ is here (verse 33).

36 Let every house [and tribe] in Israel know then assuredly,
That, both Lord and Messiah did GOD make Him,
This Joshua Whom ye crucified.

THE INVITATION

As Luke indicates in verse 40, this is the **substance** of Peter's speech. His quotations from the Sacred Writings

would be long remembered by all who heard it, and the gist of his great speech on this unique occasion could never entirely fade from the minds of his Co-Apostles. Also, Saul of Tarsus may have been one of the crowd who heard it.

Not a word is said which can grate harshly on the religious convictions of any pious Jew. Peter indicates that, in the Providence of God, they had been preserved from actually inflicting crucifixion themselves on their own Messiah. The desire and hope of all the Apostles is, that every Tribe of Israel shall believe the Great Truth, that the long-expected Messiah of " God's Own " has indeed appeared, and has risen from the dead.

THE RESULT

37 After hearing, they were pricked in their heart,
And said to Peter and the rest of the Apostles,
Brothers, what **can** we do ?

38 Peter (replied) to them, Repent (change your minds) ;
And let each one of you be baptised in the Name of Joshua Messiah, unto remission of your sins ;
And ye (too) shall receive the gift of THE HOLY SPIRIT.

39 For to you is the promise (made) and to your children,
And to all that are afar off, as many as JHVH our God *shall call* unto (Him).

40 And with many other words he was giving Testimony.
And he was exhorting them, saying,
Save yourselves from this *crooked generation*.[1]

[1] Deut. 32. 5.

41 Those then who received The Word from him were baptised; and there were added on that day about three thousand souls.

HOLY BAPTISM

It is important to notice that we have here a continuation of the object of that baptism which, as Luke tells us (S. Luke **3.** 3), John the Baptist used; "the baptism of repentance for the remission of Sins," following on open confession, (Matt. **3.** 6), but amplified by the words, "In the Name of Joshua Messiah." Baptism *into* the Catholic Church, and "Into the Name of The Father, and of The Son, and of The Holy Ghost," commanded by Our Lord (as recorded in S. Matt. **28.** 19), will not come until after the 'Pentecost of the Gentiles' (Acts **10.** 48). S. Luke shows in Acts **18.** 25; **19.** 4, 5, his clear discrimination between the two.

Further, while Jews, being in 'The Family,' are baptised "In the Name," Gentiles, who are not yet in 'The Family,' must be baptised "Into the NAME."

Acts **10.** 48 will be considered later.

JOHN'S BAPTISM

John the Baptist had not baptised men into a kind of John-the-Baptist-Church; he wholly disclaimed such an idea. Nor, at the time of which we are now hearing, is Baptism regarded as admission into a Christian Church; for it has not yet heard its own name, and in its present infancy, hardly realises its own existence.[1]

By the time we reach the next century, about seventy years later, the whole outlook and atmosphere is changed

[1] See pp. 20, 54.

from these High-Jew days. Hence some copyist in quite early days added " to The Church " in verse 47.

That will come later.

THE SECOND BIRTH

Baptism had long been practised by the Jewish authorities as a rite which, along with circumcision, transformed heathen into proselytes and gave them a second birth into another family, " The Household of God." This necessity for Christian Baptism, as ordained by Christ Himself, was probably the great difficulty felt by Nicodemus. How could he, who, at his natural birth, was born also into " The Family of God," be born *again* into " God's Family " ? Surely, it was as impossible as a second natural birth. But the Lord lays down the same rule for the Jew, as for the Gentile. " It is necessary for you (Jews) to be born from above." (S. John 3. 7). The visible new-birth of water must accompany the invisible new-birth of THE SPIRIT, according to God's Holy Ordinance.

But the fact that Christian Baptism is also the " One Baptism for the remission of sins " has never been allowed to fall out of sight. It is both " a new birth " whereby each becomes " the child of God " ; and also through ' Repentance, whereby we forsake sin, and Faith, whereby we steadfastly believe,' it is the " One Baptism for the remission of sins." In the early Christian centuries this latter aspect was predominant ; and great numbers of men postponed it till near their death, in dread lest (as Baptism could not be repeated) sins after Baptism should not receive forgiveness. The Catholic Church has pointed out a better way.

But on this Day of Pentecost, these first-fruits of the

great harvest of souls, the three thousand, are already in ' The Family.'

We are told about the quantity ; what was the quality of the new adherents ?

QUALITY

Shall we look for a hint as to the answer to this question, which may be given to us as we listen to the conversations among members of the congregation which is pouring out of a popular great London church :

...% " Splendid sermon ! Didn't see you on the links yesterday. . . . "

...% " Yes ! Pretty good ! But I do wish he wouldn't. . . . "

...% Won't remember a word of it to-morrow.

...% Say nothing. Go home thinking.

...% Hardly realise that they have been in a corner of Heaven, for the worship of God.

100% Have listened to a message which the preacher, after earnest prayer, and thought, and preparation, feels has been given to him by the Holy Spirit, and which he thinks must appeal to the heart of every one there present, because its truth is so evident.

Perhaps the history of some later chapters in Acts will give us a further answer.

EARLY CONVERTS

Not all early converts, it is to be feared, whether from Judæa, or China, or Africa, are to be invested with halos indiscriminately.

But we may conclude, with much probability, that there are not many of the respectable Low-Jew Temple-goers among the three thousand. S. Paul will tell us how some twenty years later, there are " not many wise

after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble "[1] among the brethren.

And Luke's own narrative seems to imply that the great majority are the poor, the foolish, the weak, the despised. Twentieth-century Christian missionaries still tell us how it is "the-poor-who-have-good-tidings-preached-to-them"[2] who come in. Often one of the first thoughts of the earnest unselfish missionary is 'How can we feed them?' He is ready to say that nought of the things which he possesses is his own, he will hold all his things in common with these poor folk, and will distribute at his own table (if only the Christians at home will give him the means), to every man according as he has need.[3]

Doubtless from the earliest days there have been some 'Rice-Christians.'

On the other hand, Luke speaks of Peter's audience as devout men; not the openly profane and irreligious. We may think of the three thousand therefore as mostly poor; and, morally, between the two classes represented by irreligious sinners on the one hand, and self-righteous Pharisees on the other.

DESCRIPTION OF A LONG PERIOD, FOLLOWING THE EVENT

The work thus inaugurated is continued under circumstances which Luke proceeds to describe.

THEIR RELIGIOUS LIFE

42 They used to be all continuing steadfastly
In the Teaching of The Apostles,
In The Communion (or The Fellowship), of The Apostles,

[1] 1 Cor. 1. 26. [2] S. Matt. 11. 5. [3] Acts 4. 32–35.

In the Breaking of the Bread [Holy Communion]
and
In the (public) prayers [at The Temple and
Synagogue].
Great reverence was being shown,
43 There was (a persistent) [1] fear on every soul,
Many wonders and signs were happening through
The Apostles.

THEIR CORPORATE LIFE

44 All the believers used to be together (as a body)
and
They used to have all things in common, and
45 They were selling their possessions and their
goods, and
Were distributing (their property) to all,
according
As any man was in need.
46 Day by day (also)
They used to meet together unanimously in The
Temple,
Breaking bread (together) in their homes ;
They were sharing their food with gladness and
sincerity of heart ;

THEIR LIFE AS CITIZENS

47 They were praising God,
They were in favour with all the people,
And the Lord was knitting those who were being
saved day by day together-in-one.

A graphic picture by the historian of those early weeks.

[1] Note Imperfect Tense here, and throughout the passage.

The characteristics of the time were :

Great religious fervour, and joy (43), (47).
Reverence for the position and teaching of the Apostles (42).
Regular Communions (42).
Generosity to all members (45), (46).
A feeling of union (44), (47).
Great popularity in Jerusalem (47).

COMMUNITY OF POSSESSIONS

Perhaps in the minds of some there was a too materialistic remembrance of the Lord's words about receiving an hundredfold,[1] which resulted somewhat later in a great sin, and a terrible punishment.[2]

Further, there is little doubt that all hoped for His very speedy Return.

But there was also the fact that Our Lord had lived this community life with His Apostles. They had given up all to follow Him, and it would naturally occur to many of the new believers to follow His and their example. As is well-known, this eating together is esteemed a matter of the greatest importance among Eastern peoples, as a pledge of unity and bond of brotherhood, whilst the duty of hospitality is much more universally observed there than in some Western countries.

THE AGAPE, OR FEAST OF LOVE

Out of this loving supply, mentioned in verse 46, of the needs of these High-Jew widows and other poor folk, there grew up an established ' Christian Service,' which lasted for very many years. This was the " Agape" or " Feast of Love," which was long continued, even

[1] S. Matt. 19. 29 ; S. Mark 10. 29. [2] Chap. 5. 1–11.

after the supply of the needs of the poor was no longer met in the same way that it was in those earliest days.

Alas ! in less than twenty years, it had been so woefully perverted, that in his First Letter to Corinth, S. Paul exhibits a lurid picture of the well-to-do-Christians feasting at the ' high-table,' while their poorer brethren fed on the scraps thrown from the rich men's table. And then (the mere thought of it sends a shudder through Paul's frame) some of them proceed, after a night's revel, to Holy (?) Communion—drunk ! Read all 1 Cor. 11. 17–34. Paul saw something very different from halos at Corinth.

OLD TESTAMENT TEACHING

The teaching of the Apostles was based on that knowledge of Prophetic Scriptures which they had learned from the Lord, as " He opened their mind that they might understand the Scriptures." [1] This is shown by Peter's opening sermon, and it was evident even to their enemies. Further, there was a regular attendance at the public services in the Temple, to which place they looked for Messiah suddenly to come.[2]

Meanwhile, numbers were growing steadily, and there must have been a great hope that ere long the entire Nation would accept the Good News.

The close of this first epoch of the new High-Jew party, is depicted by Luke as marked by popularity and respect, among the population of Jerusalem.

THE CREED OF THE APOSTLES

For dwellers in the twentieth century, this chapter has a further special interest. We glean from it the following (numbers refer to verses) :

[1] S. Luke 24. 45. [2] Mal. 3. 1.

The Apostles believe definitely, from the first,

In God (17), (22), (23), the Father (33),
And, In Jesus (36) Christ (36), . . . our Lord (36),
Who was . . . born (30) . . .
Suffered (24) . . . was crucified, dead, and buried (24), (31),
He (went) into Hades (27, (31),
The . . . day He rose again (24), (31), (32) from the dead (24),
He ascended into Heaven (33), (34),
And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father (33),
And, In the Holy Ghost (17), (33),
The . . . apostolic (42) . . . communion (42) (of the saints),
The Forgiveness of Sins (38).

Let us now add to the above, what we gather from further apostolic utterances in Acts **4.** 24–31 ; **10.** 40–42 ; **13.** 27–30 ; and we find them telling us :

We Apostles believe,

In God the Father . . . Maker of Heaven and Earth (**4.** 24)
And In Jesus Christ, His Only Begotten Son (**13.** 33), Our Lord,
Who was . . . born . . .
Suffered under Pontius Pilate (**4.** 27 ; **13.** 28),
Was crucified, dead, and buried (**13.** 29).
He (went) into Hades,
The third day (**10.** 40) He rose again from the dead,
He ascended into Heaven,
And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father,
From thence He shall come to judge both the quick and the dead (**10.** 42),
And, In the Holy Ghost,

The . . . Universal (**2.** 21, 39) Church (**5.** 11; **8.** 1),
The Communion (Fellowship) of the Saints (**26.** 10),
The Forgiveness of Sins.

Is not this well called " The Creed of the Apostles " ?

THE VIRGIN-BIRTH

We cannot be surprised that, during the life-time of Mary The Blessed, in an atmosphere which was so hostile to The Faith, we find no public proclamation of the Truth of the Virgin-Birth. But the same historian who has given us this account of Apostolic beliefs, has recorded in his " First Volume " a most definite and unambiguous declaration of it. He regards it of such importance, that his account of the event, and its attendant circumstances, occupy one-tenth of his whole Volume. This Truth is something too sacred to be publicly proclaimed to a wicked and hostile world. It is for the reverent ears of believers only.

The further truths about—
The Resurrection of the Body, and
The Life Everlasting,
do not as yet occupy the attention of those who were in daily expectation of the Return of The Lord. But the Apostolic Letters reveal their firm belief in these two concluding articles. While their lives and deaths tell us that their " Creed " was no mere form of words, but was written by THE HOLY SPIRIT in " the tables that were hearts of flesh." [1]

[1] Cf. 2 Cor. 3. 3.

CHAPTER C (A.D. 30)

THE FIRST ATTACK

A MIRACLE

THE rise of one more sect in Judaism would not, of itself, excite much hostility. And it is evident that the High-Jews were in great favour with the population of Jerusalem generally. The first attack on the new denomination came from the Broad-Jew party, and was only secondarily connected with religious views.

Although Our Lord spoke so strongly against the failings of the Low-Jews, it was the Broad-Jew Priests who were predominantly concerned in bringing about His Death.

Luke, in accordance with his declared plan, "traces the course of events accurately from the first," [1] and finds the immediate origin of this attack in a miracle.

Possessing the true historical instinct, he does not record miracles merely for the sake of their own temporary interest.

AN ASSASSINATION

We may illustrate this from our own times, thus: Many murders, some of which created widespread attention at their own period, were committed during the years 1900–1920, and their details were recorded at great length in newspapers. But the historian of that

[1] S. Luke 1. 3.

period will pass them over as unworthy of his readers' attention. One murder, however, he is certain to record. That is the murder of the Archduke of Austria, in June 1914. He will tell of this, not because it was a murder, but because it formed the pretext for the outbreak of the "Great War"; and because he must "trace the course of events from the first."

In like manner Luke now inserts a 'miracle,' not because it was a 'nine-days'-wonder,' but because without this insertion his readers will not clearly understand the events which followed.

THE EVENT

At some date, of which Luke was not informed, during the period which he sketches in 2. 42–47, among the wonders and signs done by the Apostles which he mentioned (verse 43), there occurred the following (perhaps the first of the Apostolic miracles):

3. 1 Peter and John were going up into the Temple at the Hour of The Prayer (the ninth hour) [about 3 p.m.].
2 And a certain man, who was lame from his mother's womb, was being carried, whom (his friends) used to lay daily at the Gate of The Temple which is called The Beautiful Gate,[1] that he might ask alms from those entering into The Temple.
3 He, seeing Peter and John about to enter into The Temple, asked to receive alms.
4 And Peter looked keenly at him, with John, and said, Look at us.
5 And he was giving heed to them, expecting to receive something from them,

[1] See plan of The Temple, facing p. 75.

6 When Peter said,
Silver and gold have I none.
But what I have, that I give thee.
In the name of Joshua Messiah the Nazoræan,
Walk !
7 And he grasped him by the right hand, and raised him up.
And immediately his feet and his ankle-bones became firm.
8 And leaping up, he stood, and began to walk, and he went in with them into The Temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

GOOD CHURCHMEN

(Verse 1) (*a*) If you know a man who goes regularly to Matins and Evensong at the Cathedral, you do not ask if he is a good churchman. Peter and John are here represented by Luke as good jew-churchmen. So was Joshua the Nazoræan who taught them.

Now, the Services at the Temple were conducted by Broad-Jew Priests who had been instrumental in killing Him ; they were attended by Low-Jews whom He had severely denounced. Peter and John knew nothing, apparently, of Christianity of a type which refuses to join in worship with others whose forms of prayer are not agreeable ; which seeks another place in which to pray if the minister's life or teaching is not up to their own immaculate standard. Peter and John are working to bring their church (Jewish though it is) to Messiah.

The Modern Christian is often working to bring folk to his own ideas about Christ and His Religion.

(*b*) Luke, a Gentile, writing to another Gentile, explains that the Hour of Prayer was the ninth hour,

just as we explain to English readers that it was about 3 p.m.

(Verse 6) The Apostles were dependent on their friends for food.

(Verse 7) Luke here uses the medical terms current in his day.

(Verse 8) The cure was a complete one; the man could leap; and he filled the air with his cries of "Praise the Lord!"

THE RESULT

9 And all the people saw him, walking and praising God;
10 And they recognised him;
That he was the man who used to sit for alms at The Beautiful Gate of the Temple;
And they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened to him.
11 And when Peter and John were going out,
He was accompanying and keeping hold of them;
And all the people, who were wondering,
Came running to them unto the Portico which is called "The Portico of Solomon," amazed.

CODEX D, OR THE BEZAN MANUSCRIPT

(Verse 11) We have adapted here a passage which occurs in one of the Manuscript copies of "The Acts," called the Bezan Manuscript, or Manuscript D. (See pp. 32, 209 (note), 250.)

It is thought by some scholars that this Bezan Manuscript may represent a first rough copy of Luke's great Work. But see later.[1]

[1] Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to explain the causes of these variant-readings, which worry our literary nerves; and forasmuch as for every variant-reading there are three or more

THE EXPLANATION AFORESAID

Now Luke wrote (only in Greek, not English) like this : ANDASTHELAMEMAN, and so forth, with no spaces between words. For you, the twentieth-century reader, we shall insert spaces.

So Luke, having got his (possibly very rough) copy together, began to make the final letter which Tychicus was to take to Troas to Theophilus.

Well, Luke having written, AS PETER WAS GOING OUT AND JOHN HE WAS GOING OUT WITH THEM HOLDING THEM, said to himself, " I don't like that way of putting it after all." So he draws his pen through it, and the final result is this : . . . AND AS HE WAS HOLDING THEM . . . and so forth.

Then the Codex-Bezae-Scribe copies out the whole, but does not cross through the letters as Luke did.

ANOTHER EXPLANATION

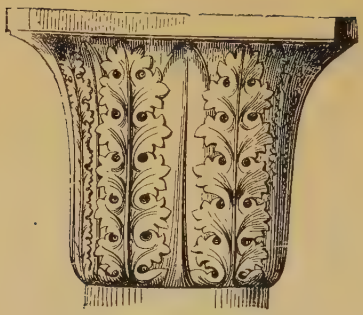
It is quite possible that Luke, having with great care and labour written this Second Volume, may have made a second copy himself, to send (say) to the Church at Philippi. In that case, he would not have hesitated, here and there, to make slight alterations in his wording. And it would be practically impossible for him to avoid slight differences of letters or words.

SOLOMON'S PORTICO

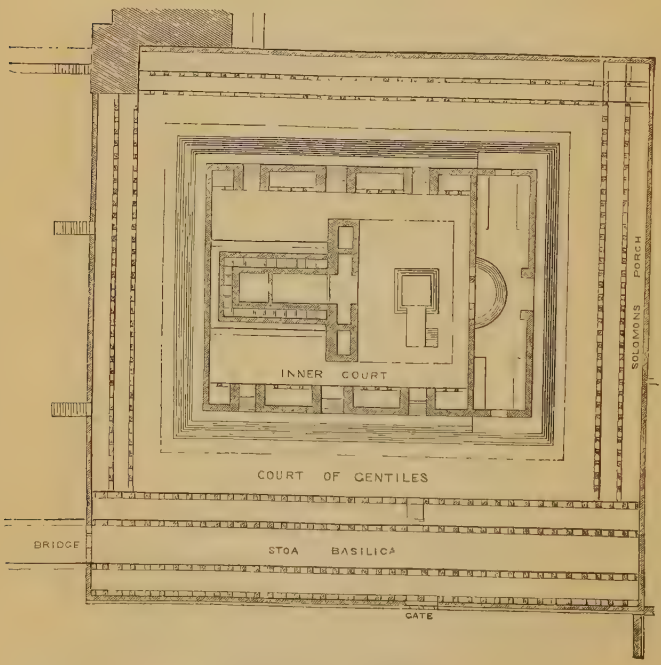
We shall hear again of Solomon's Portico. It was a lofty building, as large as some of our Cathedrals, open at the sides, and with a flat roof supported by massive

explanations ; it seems good to the editor to write another explanation, in order that the reader may know with greater certainty that for Textual, or Higher, Critics,

It isn't as easy as it looks !



CAPITAL OF PILLAR, AT SOLOMON PORCHWAY OF THE TEMPLE.



PLAN OF THE TEMPLE.

[*To face p.* 75.

pillars. This Bezan passage reminds us that it was outside the precincts of the Temple proper. Our Lord had made use of it for some of His addresses,[1] and soon we shall hear of His Apostles meeting there regularly for their teaching.

It was along one side of The Temple precincts.[2]

We notice that Luke says this Portico is called (not was called) Solomon's. As the Temple was destroyed in A.D. 70, this may be an indication that Luke wrote his book before that destruction; because, if he had written after A.D. 70 we should expect him to have said "used to be called."

PETER'S ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE

12 Peter, seeing this, thus addressed the people,
Israelites;
Why are ye wondering at this?
Why are ye gazing at us, as though by our own power or godliness, we have made him walk?
13 *The* GOD *of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob,*
The GOD *of our fathers,*
Glorified His Servant Joshua,
Whom ye delivered up,
And denied before the face of Pilate,
When he gave judgment for His acquittal.
14 And ye denied the Holy and the Just,
And asked for a man who was a murderer to be granted unto you.
15 But the *Fount of Life*, you killed;[3]
Whom God raised from the dead,
Of Whom we are Testimony-Bearers.
16 And at the believing of His Name,

[1] S. John 10. 23. [2] See Plan.
[3] Ps. 36. 9; Prov. 13. 14.

His Name made strong this man whom ye are beholding, and whom you know.
Yea, the belief which is through Him, gave him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

FORGIVENESS

Confident in the appeal to the God of Israelitish history, and to the evidence of their own senses, Peter boldly denounces that conduct of the crowd which had occurred some months earlier. Many of his hearers had clamoured but a short time ago, for the crucifixion of his Master. He points out that he and his friend John make no claim for themselves.

Further, as they have learned the Lord's own Forgiveness of His murderers,[1] they proclaim in gentle language, God's offer to Israel of complete amnesty. He proceeds

RETURN OF MESSIAH

17 And now brethren, I know that you did it through ignorance [1];
As did also your Rulers.
18 [It is God's working],
The things which GOD fore-announced, through the mouth of all the Prophets, that His Messiah should suffer,
He filled-full thus. [Through your action.]
19 Repent therefore, and turn again,
That these sins of yours may be blotted out,
That so there may come seasons of refreshing
From the presence of THE LORD,

[1] "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (S. Luke 23. 34).

20 And that He may send (again) the Messiah
Who was fore-appointed for you, even Joshua :
21 Whom Heaven must receive,
Until the times of re-establishment of all things,
Of which God spoke through the mouth of the holy Prophets who have been since His world began.

[Messiah is not dead, but risen and ascended ; and when The Nation repents, He will return again to usher in the age of the glorious Kingdom, restored to you once more. Remember what Moses, the greatest of our Prophets, said,]

THAT PROPHET

22 Moses, verily, said,
A Prophet shall THE LORD GOD *raise up unto you,*
From among your brethren,
As He raised up me.
To Him shall ye hearken in all things whatsoever He shall speak unto you.
23 *And it shall come to pass that every soul,*
Who will not hearken to That Prophet,
Shall be utterly destroyed from among The People.

Joshua the Nazoræan is That Prophet.[1]

24 Yea, and all the Prophets from Samuel and his successors, as many as spoke, they also announced these days.
25 Ye are the *sons of the prophets,*
And of the Covenant which God covenanted with your fathers,
Saying unto Abraham,
And in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

[1] See S. John **1.** 21.

26 But it is to you first that God,
Having raised up *His Servant*,
Sent Him to bless you,
In turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

EFFECT OF THE MIRACLE

The speech, throughout, is that of an earnest, patriotic Jew, zealous for the welfare and the glory of his Nation. Many of his hearers were convinced, and the number of male believers is found at this period to be about five thousand, or about one in three hundred of the whole population ; and there were many women among them besides. As in Peter's other recorded address, so now he bases his words entirely on the Old Testament Books, in whose meaning the Apostles had been so fully instructed by their Lord. There is nothing at present, from these High-Jew teachers, which can arouse religious animosity among " the people."

ALARM OF THE PRIESTS

But it is far otherwise with the Broad-Jew *Rulers*. They see in this speech a serious public attack on them for their judicial action some months before.

A report of what is going on in Solomon's Portico is carried to these Rulers by some of the Temple officials, or, may be, some of them pass through the Portico on their way home after Service. Urged by guilty consciences, they are convinced that a plot for revenge is being engineered against them ; which will reveal itself when the number of adherents of these Galileans is sufficiently large for them to declare their object openly. Temple-guards are hastily collected, and they apprehend the two Nazoræans, as Peter is concluding his address.

THE ARREST

4. 1 And as they were speaking to the people,
There came upon them the priests [who were on duty] [1]
And the Captain of The Temple,
And (some of) the Sadducees,
2 Annoyed at their teaching the people,
And proclaiming in the case of Joshua,
The (His) resurrection from the dead.
3 And they cast hands on them,
And put them into ward until the morrow,
For it was already eventide.

LUKE'S ACCURACY

We notice in this paragraph Luke's accurate knowledge. Though a Gentile he evidently knows about :

The twenty-four courses of priests who 'went-on-duty' for a week at a time.

The officer in charge of the guard of priests and Levites who watched The Temple.[2]

The fact that this was an attack by the Broad-Jew Party.

That the Broad-Jews were opposed to the teaching of resurrection, and particularly of this Resurrection.[3]

That the Jewish law forbade the trial of accused persons after nightfall-at-the-twelfth-hour.[4]

We see, further, that Peter's address to the assembled crowd, together with the service of Evening Prayer in the Temple, occupied a space of some three hours.

Now, all this information could have been given to Luke by Paul. And it is by no means impossible that

[1] Cf. S. Luke 1. 8, 9.
[2] See also S. Matt. 27. 65 ; S. Luke 22. 52.
[3] See S. Matt. 22. 23.
[4] See also, S. Luke 22. 66.

Saul was on the outskirts of this crowd in Solomon's Portico. Luke evidently gives a condensed report of the address, not a verbatim account; as may also be seen in its perusal. Hence there was time for the Priests to make arrangements for the arrest.

ON WHAT CHARGE?

During the evening there was, no doubt, a consideration of the charge, or charges,[1] which were to be preferred against the arrested men. Strictly speaking, no 'charge' could be laid against them. No charge of heresy, or breach of "The Law" could be alleged.

CAUSES OF ANNOYANCE

But Luke indicates three 'Causes of Annoyance.'

(1) The fact that the Apostles were teaching; and so usurping the duties of Scribes and Rabbis.

(2) That they taught "resurrection," and based their teaching on the 'alleged' Resurrection of Joshua the Nazoræan.[2]

Here follows in Luke's account a verse which at first sight comes awkwardly between verses 3 and 5. Had it not been there, we should have felt no need for any insertion between these two verses, for verse 5 follows quite naturally on verse 3.

> 4 But many of those who heard The Word believed: And the number of the men (not counting women) was now grown to be about five thousand.

This is the last time that we hear in Acts of the "numbering of the people." Some have supposed that Luke intends to mark 'the close of a period.'

[1] Cf. S. John 11. 47–50.
[2] Is this a "goad-prick"?

But appreciating the fact that Luke's skill as a historian is often shown by his insertion of a word or a sentence, we may see here his ' cause of annoyance '—number

(3) Success of the High-Jews.

FIVE THOUSAND MEN

The number of adherents has been growing very rapidly, and may be now put at about ten thousand, including women. In the eyes of the Rulers, the danger of insurrection, which they hoped had been averted by the Crucifixion of The Leader of this movement, has now become a very serious matter. And if an insurrection is brought about by these new " Zealots," they who caused the crucifixion of The Leader, will be the first to fall.

To Christian readers of Luke's account, who feel that it was impossible (to the degree of absurdity), that the followers of the Lord Jesus should even contemplate such an insurrection, this most natural and inevitable view of the Broad-Jew rulers rarely suggests itself. But it must have been fully apparent to those living in A.D. 29.

The number of adherents would be estimated, partly, it may be, by records of baptisms, and also by the necessary daily provision for meals. A Christian missionary in a new area to-day is not ignorant of the numbers of adherent converts. He may also have a shrewd suspicion that some would drop off, were there a cessation of all material benefits.

THE " TRIAL," BY BROAD-JEWS

5 And it came to pass that on the morrow there were convened
Those of their [that is, the Broad-Jew party's]

Rulers, and Presbyters, and Scribes,
(Who happened to be) in Jerusalem,
6 And Annas the High-Priest [by Jewish law]
And Caiaphas [the high-priest by Roman appointment]
And John and Alexander,
And as many others as were of high-priestly lineage.

(Verse 5) Luke evidently intends to describe a "packed" meeting of the Sanhedrin. Only the Broad-Jew members are convened. Indeed, it is open to doubt whether this could be regarded, at that day, as a legal convention of the High Court. This view may be further supported by the fact that no definite charge is formulated, and that Luke portrays only an attempt to over-awe the two apostles by as large and important a gathering as can be obtained without longer notice, of high judicial and priestly authority.

HIGH-PRIESTS

(Verse 6) By the Law of Moses, the High Priest held office for life. But the Roman government had, for some reason now unknown, deposed Annas, and appointed Caiaphas, his son-in-law, as the *ruling* High-Priest.

Again we notice Luke's accurate knowledge, no doubt gained in his life with Paul, and his sojourn in Jerusalem during those two years [1] when he talked with "eye-witnesses and ministers of the word," and made it his business to "trace the course of all things accurately." [2]

Saul had ever in his Pharisee-mind the difference between God's High-Priest (Annas), and The Emperor's High-Priest (Caiaphas).

[1] See p. 8. [2] S. Luke 1. 2, 3.

Hence we find Luke always speaks of " the High-Priests."

Saul would take **his** authority from Annas only, the high-priest *de jure*; but he must also get Caiaphas, the high-priest *de facto*, to sign orders.

This probably also explains Acts **23.** 3.

" Thou Roman-made, sham, wall."

" Revilest thou God's High-Priest ? "

" I knew not, brethren, that he was a High-Priest," [I thought he was an Imperial Sham.]

" I am an Israelite Pharisee ! " [not a Roman official.]

THE TACTICS OF THIS BROAD-JEW GATHERING

7 And when they had set them in the midst,
They were demanding of them,
In what power, or in what name, did you do this ?

(*a*) The three ' Causes of Annoyance ' stated above manifestly cannot be publicly alleged in the pseudo-court.

(*b*) No charge can be made of

Disloyalty to Moses,
Profanation of The Temple precincts, or
Disregard of Holy Scripture.

Consequently, as on former well-known occasions, they make the same attempt to over-awe the Apostles as they made upon their Master (S. Luke **20.** 1, 2).

They ask questions of the Apostles, as they asked questions of Our Lord ; in the hope that these two men will incriminate themselves, and lay themselves open to a charge of blasphemy (S. Matt. **26.** 63–65 ; S. Luke **22.** 66–71), which can then be brought against them at a legal sitting of the whole Sanhedrin.

Then, it may be, they will be able to arraign them

before Pilate on the charge of attempting to foment an insurrection (S. Luke **23.** 1, 2).

Thus early do the Lord's Apostles begin to drink of their Master's Cup.[1]

THE REPLY

We may summarise verses 8–12 thus :

(Verse 7) " . . . did you do this ? "

" What do you mean by ' this ' ? "

" Do you mean this miracle ? "

If you mean to ask this, and **if** this is an examination, our answer is :

" **We** did not do this."

The Name of Joshua wrought this cure,
And His is the only Name that can cure.

8 Then Peter, filled with HOLY SPIRIT,
[As the Lord had promised],[2]
Said unto them
Rulers of The Nation (v. 6), and Presbyters (v. 5),

9 If we this day are being examined concerning a good deed done to an impotent man (and), in whom he has been made whole,

10 Be it known unto you all, and to all The Nation of Israel, that in the Name of Joshua, Messiah, the Nazoræan, Whom ye crucified, Whom God raised from the dead, in Him doth this man stand before you whole.

11 He is *The Stone which was set at nought of you the builders, which is become the head of the corner.*

12 And in none other is there this salvation,
For neither is there any other name under the heaven,

[1] S. Matt. **20.** 23.
[2] S. Matt. **10.** 17–20 ; S. Luke **21.** 12–15.

That is given among men,
In Whom we must be saved.

Again we have, no doubt, a summary of Peter's short reply.

The attitude of the Apostles is most respectful as regards their mode of address. At the same time it is uncompromising, firm, and convinced. And they base their words, as always, on the Ancient Scriptures.[1]

We of the Christian Centuries mark also a step towards the full announcement of " The Name which is above every Name," as the Divine Name. But had they that day proclaimed ' Jesus is God,' they would have given their adversaries opportunity for a charge of blasphemy, of which they would have at once availed themselves, and these adversaries would have strangled the Church-child in its infancy.

Furthermore, if the Apostles had known this Divine Truth, as we know it, who have heard or read the Nicene Creed since childhood, they could not have helped blurting out the truth.

THE EFFECT OF PETER'S REPLY

13 Now as they were beholding the boldness of
Peter and John, and as they were aware
That they were not men-of-letters,
And were ordinary private citizens, they were
astonished.
And they recognised[2] them, that they used to
be with Joshua.
14 Further, as they saw the man standing with
them, who had been healed, they had nothing
to say in refutation.

[1] See also S. Matt. **10.** 19.
[2] The same form of expression as in **3.** 10.

According to Jewish custom, " the court " (to adopt a modern term) sat in the Sanhedrin Hall, in a semi-circle, at the centre of which the accused were placed standing. It would appear that the lame man was also arrested, and brought up with the other two. If a charge of collusion in a pretended miracle could be sustained, so much the better (!). Probably there were many on-lookers, who would evince their hostility or sympathy by their remarks.[1]

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Luke thus notes the effect produced upon the members of the court.

(*a*) They were surprised that these Galilean peasants are not frightened in such an august assembly.

(*b*) They find these mere-private-citizens actually adopting the bold tones of authority.

(*c*) It is a well-known fact that these (not-men-of-letters) men who quote the Sacred Scriptures so readily and correctly have been the companions of Joshua the Nazoræan, and have received their instruction from him.

(*d*) They are as well-read in the Scriptures as many of the pupils of the Rabbis.

(*e*) The miracle is incontrovertible.

And, worst of all,

(*f*) The population of Jerusalem in general are much impressed in favour of these men, as is shown by the attitude and remarks of the spectators in the court; or by the evidence of their own eyes and ears in the streets of Jerusalem.

'THE ACCUSED' ARE ORDERED TO WITHDRAW

And discussion proceeds in private. This discussion would become known to members of the Sanhedrin who

[1] See verse 21.

were not present that day; among others, to Rabbi Gamaliel, and his pupil Saul, a man of about thirty to forty years of age, who was possibly a junior member of the Sanhedrin by this time.[1] If this be the case, we may see here one of the first "pricks" against which he kicked[2]; as he saw Gamaliel shaking with laughter, in the privacy of his own 'study'; while picturing to himself the discomfiture of Annas, and 'that fox Caiaphas,' in their sham-Meeting-of-the-Sanhedrin!

RESULT OF THE DISCUSSION

Luke sums up the general lines of the discussion, about which Paul probably told him, as follows:

15 But they commanded them to go aside out of the Sanhedrin,
And they were conferring among themselves,
16 saying,
What can we do to these men?
For, that a notable sign has happened through them, is evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it.
17 But that it may not spread further to The Nation,
Let us threaten them with threatening[3]
That they do not speak henceforth in this name to a single person.
18 And they summoned them,
And they gave them orders
That they should not go on speaking nor teaching at all, about the name of Joshua.

The action of these Broad-Jew rulers has recoiled on their own heads, and they are hoist with their own petard.

[1] See Acts 26. 10, "I gave my vote."
[2] Acts 26. 14.
[3] An Aramaic touch.

The net result is to give much greater publicity to the miracle. This may be the first of those worked by the Apostles since the Lord's Ascension. The court does not appear to have heard of any other miracles; and there is no evidence that the Apostles made any great use of miraculous powers to gain support for their message. The Resurrection was a fact so evident to themselves, that perhaps they almost wondered why every one to whom they spoke did not accept it as they did. Is not our own experience often like this?

A century ago, the mere assertion of such a case of faith-healing would at once have been sufficient to discredit the whole account of the circumstances, in the minds of those readers to whom "miracles" were only synonymous with impossibilities. But to-day there have been so many cases alleged of cures by faith, that those who really think cannot so lightly dismiss the possibility, even though they may not have had actual personal experience or demonstration.

We shall return to this later. At present we are contented with the assumption that "cures by faith" cannot be at once dismissed as impossible; and that at least Luke is telling of a case described to him as having actually occurred.

THE APOSTLES' REPLY

19 But Peter and John answering said unto them,
Whether it is right in the sight of GOD to obey
you, rather than GOD,
Judge ye.
20 For we cannot help telling the things which we
saw and heard.

RELEASE

21 And they, after further threatening, released them,
Finding nothing for which they could punish them,
On account of " the people " ;
Because they were all glorifying God about what had happened.
22 For the man was more than forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was wrought.

The reply of the Apostles is respectful, but uncompromising.

Nothing can be done, except to reiterate the threats, lest the rulers themselves should precipitate the revolution which they fear.[1]

THE RETURN HOME

23 And, being released,
They came to their own (friends),
And reported all that the High-Priests and the Presbyters said to them.
24 And they, when they heard it, with one accord lifted up their voice to God, and said,
O Lord,
Who madest the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that therein is,
25 Who by the mouth of Thy servant David didst say,
Why were the Gentiles insolent,[2]
And the peoples[3] *imagined vain things ?*
26 *The Kings of the earth set themselves in array,*
And the rulers were gathered together,
Against THE LORD, *and against His Anointed* (*Messiah*).

[1] Cf. S. Luke 20. 19 ; 22. 2 ; S. Matt. 26. 3–5.
[2] Ps. 2. 1, 2. [3] Page 36.

27 For of a truth, in this city, against Thy Holy
Servant Joshua, *whom Thou didst anoint*, *there were gathered together*,
Both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with
Gentiles [Roman soldiers] and
28 *peoples*, of Israel; to do whatsoever Thy Hand
and Thy Counsel fore-ordained to come to pass.

Luke here collects in one, the leading features of the prayers offered up by the community which had gathered together anxiously awaiting the result of this pseudo-trial. The prayers are marked by scriptural quotations, and a firm belief in the full-fill-ment of Scripture. It is filling the second Psalm full indeed, when we hear this band of Jews classing their present Broad-Jew rulers with the heathen nations spoken of in the Psalm; and indeed interpreting "*the peoples*" as though it included some of the People of Israel. This is perhaps the earliest indication of that day which is coming, when Jewish-Christian-Believers will regard their own Nation as their enemies; and of later days when Christians will class together 'Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics' (!)

It may be well to mention here that the Greek "Christ," which corresponds to the Aramaic "Messiah," when translated into English becomes "Anointed."

The prayers continue,

29 And at the present time, Lord, look upon their threats;
And grant to Thy bond-servants to speak Thy Word with all boldness,
30 While Thou stretchest out Thine Hand for healing,
And let signs and wonders be done through The Name of Thy Holy Servant Joshua.

31 And when they prayed the place in which they were assembled was shaken,
And they were all filled with THE HOLY SPIRIT.

AN UNDETERMINED PERIOD

31 And [in the days that followed] they **were** speaking the Word of God with boldness.

They not only prayed for boldness, but practised it.

The result of this "First Attack" has been to strengthen the courage of these High-Jews; to confirm in them a determination to refuse to observe the command for silence given by the Priests; and to increase very largely their popularity in Jerusalem.

But in days to come this popularity will wane more rapidly than it waxed.

CHAPTER D (A.D. 29–31)

THE CHURCH BECOMES DEFINITELY APOSTOLIC

IN the narrative which comes next, Luke's "trace-of-the-course-from-the-first" leads him, this time, to an undefined period, preceding an event. It is the period which had its commencement in Chapter B (end).

THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PERIOD

32 The multitude of them that believed used to be of one heart and soul;
And not one used to call aught of the things belonging to him, his own;
But all things used to be in common among them.
33 And with great power were the Apostles of the Lord Joshua giving the Testimony of the resurrection,
And great grace was upon them all.
34 For neither used there to be any one in need among them;
For as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them,
And would bring the prices of the things that were being sold,
35 And would lay them at the feet of the Apostles,
And distribution used to be made to each one,
According as he was in need.

Luke indicates throughout this passage, by writing

every verb in the Imperfect Tense that he is painting the picture of a period.

It is a general description of the attitude of all the believers with regard to money-matters, since the Day of Pentecost, and is intended to recall what he wrote in **2.** 44, 45.

THE POSITION OF THE TWELVE

The insertion of verse 33 between verses 32 and 34, seems at first sight to break the continuity; for 34 would follow quite naturally on 32. But this is a characteristic and emphatic touch of Luke's brush. He gives a halo to the Apostles grouped in the centre of his picture, receiving the offerings of the faithful for God's Altar. For he is about to show how The Twelve were regarded from the first, by the body of believers, as specially inspired men, filled to a very exceptional degree with THE HOLY SPIRIT; and how God Himself gave witness.

This, the Universal Church has since publicly recognised by the position given to their writings as part of Holy Scripture. All the believers received grace, but the Apostles had, in addition, received that great **power** which the Lord had promised.[1]

Luke is about to show how this was put to the test.

BARNABAS

First, however, he takes the opportunity to introduce to Theophilus, as it were, the coming Apostle, Barnabas, of whom he will have much to say in later chapters. Barnabas, however, is not yet invested with this rank, and he too ' does homage ' to the Apostles by laying the proceeds of the sale of one field from his property at

[1] Acts 1. 8.

their feet. Luke is careful to indicate that Barnabas did not sell the whole of his property. There was no attempt at compulsory Communism. Neither Barnabas nor any other believer was compelled, or even expected, to part with all possessions. But such was the love of this band of brothers, and the great grace that was upon them, that whenever need arose, they were always ready to supply it.

THE TRUE SOCIALIST

36 Joseph, who was surnamed Barnabas by The Apostles,
Which name may be translated Son of Consolation or Exhortation, [or Excellent Preacher],
A Levite, a man of Cyprus by birth,
37 Having a field, sold it and brought the money, and laid it at the feet of The Apostles.

Joseph Barnabas, so called by the Apostles on account of his great talent for preaching, was one of those Temple-assistants of the Israelitish Priests, who were called Levites, and who were of the Tribe of Levi. By birth, he was a Hellenist,[1] whose home was in Cyprus.

We shall hear later of a synagogue in Jerusalem frequented by Hellenists from Cyrene, and Cilicia.[2] Further on, we find Hellenists of Cyprus and Cyrene [3] mentioned together.

Now, Cyprus is in the Levant; and the Province of Asia, Cilicia, Alexandria, Libya, and Cyrene, help to form the coasts of this, the Eastern end of the Mediterranean.[4] It is permissible to surmise that Saul who was a native of Tarsus in Cilicia, and Joseph Barnabas who lived in Cyprus, may have both been members

[1] See p. 35. [2] Acts 6. 9. [3] Acts 11. 20. [4] See Map, p. 279.

of the regular congregation at this synagogue, when in Jerusalem. They were certainly acquainted with each other.

After Barnabas, Luke paints a contrast.

THE FALSE SOCIALISTS

5. 1 But a certain man Ananias by name, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, [just as Barnabas
2 did], and kept back part of the price [as they had every right to do], the wife also being an accomplice, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the feet of The Apostles.

Luke leaves us to infer for ourselves that the act was intentionally deceptive ; and that the pair of accomplices wished to gain more credit than they deserved.

It is not impossible that they took the words " shall receive an hundred-fold " [1] quite literally, and hoped at the return of Messiah, to get an even better percentage.

3 But Peter said,
Ananias, WHY hath Satan filled thy heart,
[Which should have been filled with HOLY SPIRIT],
So that thou didst lie to THE HOLY SPIRIT
[With WHOM The Apostles are filled],
And to deduct from the price of the land ?

You had a perfect right to keep either a part or the whole of it.

But WHY did you do this ?

4 Whilst it was remaining unsold, it remained thine ;
And when it was sold were not the proceeds at thine own disposal ?

[1] S. Matt. 19. 29.

This is no matter of money valuation, but of thy falseness of heart.

WHY didst thou plot this matter in thy heart ?
Thou didst not lie to men, but to GOD [THE HOLY SPIRIT].

5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down and expired :
And great fear came upon all that heard it.

6 And the younger men arose, and wrapped him in grave-clothes, carried him out, and buried him.

7 And it happened that, about an interval of three hours after, the woman also came in, not knowing what had happened.

8 And Peter spoke to her,
Tell me, if ye sold the land for ' so much ' ?
And she said, Yes, for ' so much.'

9 And Peter said to her,
WHY have ye conspired together to test The SPIRIT of THE LORD ?
Behold, the feet of those who buried thy husband are at the door, and they will carry thee out.

10 And she fell immediately at his feet, and expired.
And the young men entering found her dead, carried her out, and buried her by her husband.

WHY ?

Let us ask, at this point, **why** Luke has inserted this incident, in his account to Theophilus of these early days ?

We may say with certainty that it is **not** :

A warning to Theophilus against lying.
Nor a warning to him that subterfuge is lying.

Luke is a historian, and Theophilus is, presumably, a gentleman. Certainly, Luke is not dressing up a bogey to frighten Sunday School children with a punishment which is never likely to befall them. (Though it has often been so used.)

Next, shall we say that he intended to show that there were " tares and wheat " in the Early Church ?

It certainly does show this to us of the later centuries.

But Luke was writing to Theophilus.

Theophilus was an ' Early Christian ' himself, and had no illusions about fitting halos on the majority of those among whom he lived.

(The fortieth century *may* invest some of those who live in the twentieth century with halos, but our neighbours now do not even look for them !)

History tells us how Novatians, Montanists, and Puritans have tried to find and keep a pure church ; but that hypocrisy has, alas ! been found in the church of every age. Knowing Luke's methods and aims, we must look for a deeper reason than any of these. Let us look on to see what he tells us were the results ; remembering carefully that he wrote for Theophilus ; as well as, under the guidance of the HOLY SPIRIT (though unknowingly, so far as he was concerned), for the Church of the Christian Centuries.

THE RESULTS

11 And there came great fear upon all The Church,
And upon all (outsiders) who heard these things.
12 And through the strengthened hands of The Apostles,
Signs and wonders in great number were coming to pass among The People.

And they (the Apostles) used to assemble unanimously in the Portico of Solomon.

13 But of " the rest " [1] no one was daring to cement (glue) himself with them.

[That is, to stand with them as though he were one of The Twelve.]

But " the people " [2] were extolling them.

14 And the more were believers being added to The Lord,

Multitudes both of men and of women.

The number-of-thousands can no longer be counted.

The results of the incident, according to Luke, were beyond expectation.

(*a*) Those already believing are filled with that fear which comes from God.

(*b*) All who hear of it, are strongly impressed.

(*c*) The power of the Apostles, through THE HOLY SPIRIT in them, is shown by signs and wonders.

(*d*) They began to hold regular public meetings in the great Portico of Solomon just outside the Temple, in which the Two Apostles had been lately arrested by the Temple-authorities.[3]

Here the first apostolic miracle had been worked, and God's presence shown ; it was in full sight of Olivet, from whence Messiah had ascended ; and to which they expected Him to return, when " *The Lord should suddenly come to His Temple.*" [4]

(*e*) Not one of the body of believers dares to put himself on a level with The Twelve. Nor have any Christian believers dared to do so since, throughout these nineteen centuries.

[1] See p. 35.
[2] See p. 36.
[3] See Plan, facing p. 75.
[4] Mal. 3. 1.

(*f*) The people of Jerusalem hold them in the highest veneration.

(*g*) Multitudes of new adherents are flocking in.

PROPORTION

We must have due regard for proportion. These results are too great to be due merely to the punishment by God (death though it was) of two people who have told what was less-than-the-whole-truth.

Let us look again at Peter's charge.

(*a*) They lied to the Holy Spirit, with Whom the Apostles were filled.

(*b*) The lie to men is, by contrast, almost venial.

(*c*) Their hearts were filled with Satan.

(*d*) They had plotted a conspiracy. WHY ?

Was not this conspiracy an attempt to test (verse 9) whether THE HOLY SPIRIT was really in the Apostles ? Whether the Apostles were really placed by God in the position they held ? Once before, in early Israelitish History, had a similar attempt been made.

KORAH AND MOSES

Korah and his co-conspirators had tried to test whether the Power of God was in Moses and Aaron, more than in all the people. They had asked, " *Why lift ye up yourselves above the assembly of* JHVH ? " [1]

At once, and only that once, the answer of JHVH was final.[2]

It was ' *chose jugée* ' for the People of Israel throughout their whole history. No Israelite would hear a word spoken against Moses, the founder of the Mosaic Church. Once again, and once only, at the commencement of the Greater Kingdom of The Elect People of

[1] Num. 16. 1–3. [2] Num. 16. 32, 35.

God, a similar answer comes from God, which the Catholic Church has accepted as final, in the case of the Apostles. She has been, since then, The Apostolic Church.

"*They tempted God in the desert*[1]"; their imitators tempted THE HOLY SPIRIT in the Apostles. This result, given in verses 11–14, has been in the mind of Luke throughout Chapter D, as he has traced the course leading up to it, from the beginning. This would be evident to Theophilus, and would provide an answer to his supposed question, To whom am I to look for authority ?[2] And Who gave them authority ?

But also, for us in the twentieth century, there is a fuller-filling of the teaching.

SACRILEGE

Ananias endeavoured to filch gain from the Church for what he pretended to have given.

That is sacrilege.

The Church is Holy, for THE HOLY SPIRIT is in it to the end of the world ; even though the Church is mingled tares and wheat. That which is given to the Holy Church is given to God. And God has stamped with His seal, His judgment that sacrilege is sin.

YET FURTHER RESULTS

15 In consequence,
Into the streets they used to bear the sick,
And lay them on little beds (stretchers) and couches,
So that as Peter passed, perchance his shadow might overshadow one of them.

[1] Ps. 106. 14. [2] See p. 16.

BEYOND THE CITY OF JERUSALEM

16 And the population of the cities round about Jerusalem
Were assembling, bringing sick, and those vexed with unclean spirits,
And they were being (medically) treated, every one.

Look back again to Acts **1.** 8.

THE HOLY . . . APOSTOLIC CHURCH

Believers in Messiah have now learned that they are in The Holy . . . Apostolic Church. Luke will proceed to add the word Catholic.

But first he has to show how the Apostles began to wear the halo of The Master's Crown of Thorns; perhaps lest they "should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations." [1]

[1] 2 Cor. **12.** 7.

CHAPTER E (A.D. 31)

THE SECOND ATTACK

TWO POINTS OF VIEW

FROM the point of view of the Rulers of Israel, matters are becoming very serious indeed. They fear that a plot is being hatched against them by these Galilean peasants, with inconceivable skill. " The people " not only of Jerusalem, but of Judæa, is being systematically banded together, ready for the opportune moment to avenge the Crucifixion of Joshua on those who caused it.

Had they only " known the things which " might have been " for their peace of mind " !

But they saw as little of the months ahead as their blind eyes had seen of the Message of those Three Past Years.

No plot is being engineered. And in the mysterious Counsels of God, not only will these High-Jews themselves destroy their present popularity (of very transient worth); but they will, from themselves, bring upon their heads a hatred, which " the people " will bear against them for centuries.

It was not for the Apostles " to know the times and seasons " ; still less for the Broad-Jew rulers.

From the point of view of the Apostles, the prospect must have looked as bright as it did on that day when the multitudes of Jerusalem hailed their King with Hosannas.

Surely The Chosen People will all, ere long, be ready to welcome The Return of The Messiah !

Ah ! they too must drink of The Master's Cup. As the people rejected Him, so they will reject His Own. Truly ' God moves in a mysterious way.'

But HE performs HIS wonders.

VIGOROUS MEASURES

The High-Priest and his Council decide on vigorous measures. All The Twelve are apprehended. A full meeting of the Sanhedrin is convened ; and the Low-Jew members are summoned to support their Broad-Jew colleagues-of-the-Sanhedrin.

No more futile exhibitions of aristocratic dignity !

This time a definite charge can be laid, and the Low-Jew-party will be there to exhibit to these audacious peasants the unanimity of the aristocracy of The Land !

Will they ?

Methinks these priestly aristocrats are riding towards another fall.

5. 17 Then the High-Priest rose up (to action).
All those of his party (which is the sect of the Sadducees) were filled with jealous rage.

Galilean peasants (! !) are undermining their authority, and receiving a respect and homage from the populace which is the due of the nobility !

18 And they arrested the Apostles,
[Probably in Solomon's Portico],
And put them in public ward.

News of the arrest would spread through Jerusalem, and it would be angrily discussed, by partisans of both sides, that night.

19 But an angel of the Lord by night opened the
doors of the prison and brought them out ;

Martyrdom will come, but the time is not yet, in the Counsels of God ; so they are set free, in order that they may yet further share the sufferings of Messiah.

And said,
20 Go forth, and stand and speak in The Temple, to
the people, all the words of This Life.

(*a*) Hitherto they had not ventured beyond Solomon's Portico for their public teaching. But now they have definite orders to speak publicly in the Temple Court, as their Master had done.

(*b*) " The Prince of Life," killed by The People,[1] was raised to Eternal Life, and the Apostles are ordered to proclaim " This Life."

21 And having heard,
They entered into The Temple about day break,
and were teaching.

MEETING OF THE SANHEDRIN

The High-Priest having arrived, and his party,[2]
They summoned the Sanhedrin, and [this time]
All the Senate of the Children of Israel ;
And sent (their officers) to the prison,
To have them brought.

Meanwhile they sit in solemn state in the Sanhedrin Hall.

THE EMPTY PRISON

22 But the officers, on their arrival, did not find them
in the prison.
So they returned and reported,

[1] Acts 3. 15. [2] See Acts 4. 6.

23 Saying
We found the prison-house shut in full security,
and all the guards were standing at the doors.
But when we opened, we found no one within.
24 Now when the Captain of The Temple, and the
High-Priests, heard these tidings, they were
quite at a loss about them,
Wondering whereunto this would grow.

No wonder they were aghast.

What were things coming to ?

To them it appeared evident that even some of their own prison-officials had been tampered with, and were secret conspirators in this Nazoræan plot.

Broad-Jews have no belief in angels.[1]

Nor would any idea of angelic interposition suggest itself to a bench of English magistrates to-day, faced with a similar problem ; one which would throw grave suspicion on the police.

Saul, with an amused smile on his face, is watching Caiaphas whispering excitedly to Annas and The Captain, on either side of him ; their three heads close together. This trial, staged with such careful preparation, looks like becoming a fiasco.

Pity those poor Broad-Jew nobles, thus put to shame publicly ; seeing the half-veiled smiles of their secretly-pleased Low-Jew opponents, whom they had summoned to support them in putting down these Twelve " fellows of the baser sort " !

Suddenly, a guardsman rushes in, breathless, and Luke indicates how he gasps out his report.

[1] Read, for purposes of comparison with the whole of this trial, Acts 23. 6–9.

CONJECTURAL ARRANGEMENT OF THE SENATE OF ISRAEL,

THE DISCOVERY

25 And there came one and reported to them,
Behold—the men whom ye put in the prison—are
in The Temple—standing and teaching—the
people.

The Captain of The Temple leaves his seat in the semi-circle of judges, and proceeds to The Temple with his officers. There they find themselves faced by an angry populace in the Court of the People ; who are ready, on the least provocation, to riot, and to stone them for putting The Twelve in prison last night.

It is fairly evident that The Twelve have not announced the mode of their escape, to the crowd.

26 Then the Captain went with the officers, and
brought them ;
But without any violence ;
For they were afraid of the people, for fear they
should be stoned.
27 And having brought them,
They placed them in (the centre of) the Sanhedrin.

The Guards succeed in effecting an arrest, no opposition being offered by The Twelve; and the trial proceeds.

But it is in an atmosphere very different from what the Broad-Jew rulers had anticipated. Still, as the mob is out of sight, some show of authority may be made.

THE CHARGE

And the High-Priest questioned them saying,
28 Did we not command you with a command [1]

[1] An Aramaic phrasing. Saul would remember the exact words of Caiaphas at this electric moment. And no doubt, throughout this book, Luke's words get occasional Aramaic touches from S. Paul ; who drops every now and then into the phrasing of Judæa, as he tells his friend stories of those early days.

Not to teach about this name ?
And behold you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching.
And ye are desirous of bringing upon us the blood of this man.

The counts in the indictment are two :

(*a*) So far from obeying the orders of the court, they have deliberately aggravated their offence.

(*b*) They are inciting the populace to revenge the Crucifixion of Joshua, on the Rulers of the Nation.

THE DEFENCE

29 But Peter answered, and the Apostles spoke (in support) :
God must be obeyed rather than men.
30 It is the GOD of our fathers Who raised Joshua,
Whom ye lifted up *by hanging Him on a tree.*
31 Him did GOD exalt with His right hand to be a Prince and Saviour ;
For to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins.
32 And we are witnesses about these facts ;
And so is THE HOLY SPIRIT, Whom GOD hath given to them that obey Him.

(Verse 29) The tone is even bolder than on the former occasion, and we miss any formal address to the court, such as the two Apostles made then.

To the first count of the indictment the reply is,

We have our definite orders from the God of The Nation to give this Testimony.

(Verse 32) And THE HOLY SPIRIT is bearing the same Testimony in, and through us.

To the second count :

(Verses 30, 31) Our preaching is concerned only with this Testimony ; viz. that Joshua the Nazoræan is risen from the dead, and has given us orders that, far from seeking to avenge Him, we are to proclaim that as " a Prince of God " (an Israel), and as " a Saviour " (a true Joshua), He offers full forgiveness to the whole Nation for their sins against Him, and will aid them in their efforts towards repentance for their sins.

(Verse 31) In Aramaic, the name Israel means " Prince of God," and the name Joshua means " JHVH is Saviour."

To those who heard the words (which were spoken in that language), they sounded thus : " He whom you crucified is an Israel and a Joshua."

The Apostles make no departure from their invariable position ;

That they are Jews,
With a message to Jews,
From the GOD of the Jews,
Consonant with the Scriptures of the Jews.

They exhibit boldness ; but surely, conciliation towards the murderers of their Lord could no further go. But, as invariably is the case, it is useless to try and persuade those who are convinced of the infallibility of their own opinions ; especially when their dignity, and personal safety is at stake. The *amour propre* of the rulers has suffered one severe blow already ; and they are now enraged beyond measure at these men-of-no-letters quoting their own " Law " against the Keepers of " The Torah " [1] and at the insolence of these Galilean peasants offering to them—to the Nobles—to the High Court of the Nation—and that publicly before all " the rabble "—**Forgiveness !**

[1] See p. 11.

Is this one of the early " pricks," against which Saul " kicked " ? [1]

RAGE

33 But they, when they heard this, were cut to the heart, and wanted to kill them.

The word which Luke uses to describe their feelings means, " they were sawn through " or, " the Apostles' words went through their hearts like a saw." This may have been the actual word which Paul used to Luke, as he described what Saul, the haughty Pharisee, felt at that moment. It was even more than a " prick " with the goad.

Some members, filled with rage and fury, propose that sentence of death shall be passed forthwith, and the majority of those present are in agreement.

AN OPPORTUNIST APPEAL

There can have been little real desire on the part of the Low-Jews to help their Broad-Jew opponents to extricate themselves from the morass into which their blundering tactics had led them. And any little desire to do so would be lessened by the thought that, if they supported this sentence of death, they would have to share that unpopularity with " the people," which had already so strongly manifested itself.

34 But there stood up one in the Sanhedrin,
A Pharisee named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law,[2]
Held in honour by all the people ;
And commanded to put the men outside a little while.

[1] Acts 26. 14.
[2] As we might say, Professor Gamaliel, D.D.

RABBAN[1] GAMALIEL SPEAKS FOR HIS PARTY

35 And he said to them,
Israelites,
Take heed to yourselves, as regards these men, what ye are about to do.
36 For before these days rose up Theudas, giving himself out to be somebody; to whom a number of men attached themselves, about four hundred. He was slain, and all who were obeying him, were scattered, and came to nought.
37 After that man, rose up Judas the Galilean, in the days of the enrolment,[2] and drew away people after him.
He also perished, and all who were obeying him were scattered.
38 And what I say to you now is this:
Refrain from these men, and let them alone.
For if this counsel or this work be of men, it will be overthrown;
39 But if it is of GOD, ye will not be able to overthrow them,
(And beware) lest haply ye be found fighters-against-GOD.

The advice of Gamaliel is sound; as might be expected from one of his very great reputation. (He is to this day classed by Jews among their great Rabbans.) Albeit, it is a policy of 'Wait and See,' and one lacking in boldness and decision.

His pupil Saul would hear all the details of this trial from Gamaliel, even if he were not present, as we suggest; and as St. Paul, would pass them on to his friend Luke.

[1] See p. 36.

[2] See S. Luke 2. 1, 2 (R.V.).

THE DECISION

40 And to him they agreed.
So they summoned the Apostles ;
Beat them ;
Ordered them not to speak about the name of Joshua ;
And let them go.

The long harangue of Gamaliel, of which the above is a summary, gave their ruffled feelings time to calm down somewhat. It was evident that the Low-Jew party would give the High-Priests no support ; so they appeased the injury to their pride by sentencing the Apostles to thirty-nine stripes (" forty stripes save one ") each, for disobeying their orders ; and released them.

THE RESULT

41 They therefore, as they were departing from the presence of the Sanhedrin, were rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonour for The Name.

They expressed their joy openly in the court. At least, they have gained thus much result of the angelic deliverance ; though not yet does Peter say, " Lord, I lay down my life for thy sake."

Another " prick " for Saul.

THE PERIOD FOLLOWING (About A.D. 32–36)

42 And every day,
In The Temple, and in the homes of " the people,"
They were unceasing in their teaching and preaching of Joshua as The Messiah.

The Apostles were proving apt pupils of their Master. With lacerated backs, they went home " despising the

shame," and expressing their joy [1] that He counted them worthy to share His suffering.

Henceforward, they continued their work in Jerusalem unmolested by the rulers, who found that they had nothing personally to fear from these men. But the tide was nearing the flood, so far as Jerusalem was concerned ; and the ebb was coming, though not visibly as yet. The net had been cast, and the Apostles had caught many ; but no sea is ever emptied of all its fish.

We may picture the Apostles going on for some few years consolidating ; working hard to give instruction to their new High-Jew community. But their prestige with the populace is diminishing. For, many months pass, and the promised Return of Messiah does not come to pass.

The mob always ceases to admire and sympathise with people who wear halos of thorn too long.

Gamaliel's policy has proved successful. " Let them alone ! "

Well, the high-flood of their Master's popularity ebbed away to nothing within the week, Palm Sunday—Easter.

They have, at least, succeeded in establishing the High-Jew Sect, and it will not die ; but will become The Holy Catholic Church.

But we have not yet heard of Christians, and the High-Jew Sect has still to become Catholic.

So ends Book I.

Looking back from a distance of twenty centuries, the Church sees the halos which the Apostles wear, now and for ever. These halos were then like their Master's halo of thorns ; and they were journeying on their ways to their twelve thrones of worldly scorn, like the one on

[1] Heb. 12. 2.

which their Lord was enthroned. 'The twelve tribes of Israel were judged'; [1] and found wanting; through their rejection of the testimony of these SAINTS.

Now their Lord and ours, the angels and the saints of GOD, see them enthroned in glory; because they trod their Master's path of sacrifice, and THE HOLY SPIRIT has made them like HIM.

And in GOD'S own time "all Israel shall be saved." [2]

[1] S. Matt. **19.** 28. [2] Rom. **11.** 26.

BOOK II

THE CONVERSION OF SAUL TO JESUS

CHAPTER F (A.D. 30–35)

THE FIRST CLERGY

GRUMBLING

In accordance with his expressed principle, Luke in Book II. traces back to the first the course of the events which lead up to his finale.

In this section of his work he can obtain all the accurate information which he needs, from his friend and teacher Paul.

Let us follow with him, first, the back-wards-trace.

The finale is :

The Conversion of Saul to Joshua Messiah.

The links in the chain are :

(*a*) Heresy-hunt to Damascus, caused by (**9.** 1-9)
(*b*) The acts of Philip, following on (**8.** 4-40)
(*c*) First attempt at heresy-extirpation in Jerusalem, caused by (**8.** 1-3)
(*d*) The speech of Stephen, who was one of (**7.** 2-53)
(*e*) The Seven, appointed by The Twelve (**6.** 3-6)
(*f*) To serve tables, because of (**6.** 2)
(*g*) Grumbling (**6.** 1).

Grumbling ! Verily, "*God's ways are not as our ways.*"

6. 1 In those days, [recorded in Book I],
When the number of the disciples was growing [so rapidly],

There used to be grumbling (murmuring) by
the Hellenists against the Hebrews,[1]
Because (they said), their widows were being
overlooked in the daily deaconing.[2]

It is manifest that no exact date can be given for this, which was of daily occurrence over some considerable period. All Luke can say is that the grumbling used to occur during the early days of which he has been writing in Book I.

It would !

These early-folk were not all ' patient saints.'

Vicars and churchwardens to-day know well what happens after the distribution of those Christmas charities provided by saints now at rest, who " parted with possessions," that there might be " a supply for those who have need " to-day.[3]

Sometimes the distribution produces more than a " murmur."

And when Communism is tried on a large scale, " murmuring " has to be quelled by gaol and bayonets.

These ' Early Christians ' had not been brought up from childhood on Catechism-training in Sunday Schools.

Now, a consideration of Acts 2. 42, 46 makes it evident that this was not only a money dole ; but an invitation to poor folk, by the believers who could offer them places at their better-spread tables.

Hebrew (that is, Judæan) [4] poor were well-known to many of their compatriots in Jerusalem. But Hellenists, who had come from abroad to the metropolis of their race, and had then fallen into poverty, would be less known, and would be frequently overlooked.

[1] See p. 34.
[2] See p. 33.
[3] See Acts 2. 45.
[4] See p. 34.

ACTION OF THE APOSTLES

2 Then The Twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said,
It is not fitting that we should forsake (the preaching of) the Word of God [to the many thousands of Jerusalem],
To deacon [1] at tables.

There have been those who have wondered why the Apostles did not go out almost at once, to their missionary work in the heathen world. Let us imagine England to-day entirely Jewish, with twelve Christian clergy starting work in (say) Birmingham, in an attempt to convert that city first of all to the (hitherto-unheard-of) Christian Faith.

It would be no matter for surprise if they said, 'We 'are too busy, trying to cope with this rapid growth of 'adherents, to find time for the supervision of a fair dis-'tribution of free meals in Christian Homes. Some of 'you laymen must undertake the organising of this.'

3 So, brethren, look ye out from among you seven men, of good report,
Full of THE HOLY SPIRIT
And of wisdom,
Whom we may appoint over this business.
4 But we will continue steadfastly in the Prayer, and in the deaconing of the Word.

Returning to our Birmingham illustration, we may thus continue the words of the twelve Christian clergy.

'So look out from among yourselves seven men (or more if you can find them):

(*a*) Who are held in general esteem in the City,

(*b*) Who are sincere Christian believers, and

[1] See p. 33.

(*c*) Who are sound business-men.

'We shall continue at our work of conducting the 'gatherings for prayer and Holy Communion, and 'evangelising the people of the City.'

[It is hardly necessary to point out that 'S. Philip's' and all the other churches in Birmingham would be Jewish, and would be called synagogues.]

Despite the occurrence of the term "deaconing" in verses 1, 2, 4, above, consideration of its use here, and in **1.** 17, 25 indicates that this is not the establishment of the Catholic Diaconate. More probably, these seven men were among those who, a few years later, are styled the Presbyters among the brethren (Acts **11.** 30; **15.** 2, 4, 6, 22).

We must remember that there is hardly a single Christian historical record remaining, of the years A.D. 64–100, outside of the later books of the New Testament,[1] and these do not profess to be historical in purpose.

But had we histories written by Christians of that period A.D. 64–100, they would probably show us how the 'diaconate' developed out of this original appointment of The Seven.

The passages 1 Tim. **3.** 1–13 and **5.** 1, 17, give us a glimpse of this development at one point.

There was a recognised 'Order of Deacons' when the second century began, and it is evident that Christian writers of that century thought of this appointment of The Seven as in some sense its origin.

But in A.D. 30–35 the functions of these seven men are more nearly allied to the duties of Churchwardens in the twentieth century, or of Free-Church Deacons. The qualifications demanded by the Apostles are needful to-day.

[1] See p. 37.

APPOINTMENT OF THE SEVEN

5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude.
And they chose
Stephen, a man full of faith and of THE HOLY SPIRIT,
And Philip,
And Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch.
6 And they set them before The Apostles ;
And they prayed, and laid hands on them.

The names of The Seven, as we might have expected, are all Hellenistic. Their especial duty was to look after the Hellenist poor. They were probably all highly respected elderly Jews-by-birth, but of formerly foreign domicile ; except the last-named. He was a Gentile who had become a proselyte.[1]

Luke mentions with interest that he came originally from Antioch.

Stephen and Philip head the list, because we are to hear more of them later.

It is important to notice that The Twelve reserve to themselves the power of appointment ; and that they regard even secular Christian ministering as a matter for prayer, and for appointment by Apostolic authority.

AN UNDEFINED PERIOD

7 (*a*) The word of God was increasing, and
(*b*) The number of the disciples was multiplying exceedingly in Jerusalem, and moreover
(*c*) A great number of the priests were becoming obedient to The Faith.

(*a*) and (*b*) may be partially covered by the period

[1] See pp. 34, 36.

described in Book I. But it is evident that (*c*) records an important advance on that period. Not only had the Broad-Jew opposition ceased, but some of the members of that party, and even of their leaders the priests, were accepting the High-Jew Faith.

Do not let us suppose that it is necessary to think that in those days they ceased to be either priests or Broad-Jews. Paul, years after he was a Christian, could say, " I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee " without any feeling of incongruity. It was like the days of our Methodist grandfathers, when a Methodist was one of the most regular communicants that the Church of England owned ; when the founder of the Connexion could say, " I die a Priest of the Church of England."

But, no man could be both Pharisee and Sadducee.

CHAPTER G (A.D. 36)

THE FIRST MARTYR

STEPHEN

We have no contemporary picture of Stephen beyond what we read here.

Let us paint a picture of an elderly Jew, who has spent most of his life in Alexandria, at the head of a large business firm extending through Egypt; and who, having now retired has come to end his days in Jerusalem. He is a good business man, an excellent organiser, with long experience, and is highly respected in Jerusalem. He is a generous, pious, Jew; and has attached himself to the congregation of the Libystine-Cyrenian-Alexandrian Synagogue. Becoming a convert to the new faith, he puts the same energy into the promulgation of this, that he put into his own business. He always has taken his own line, and is fearlessly independent, imperious, and with small regard for the opinions of others. He has no use for any half-measures.

8 Stephen, full of grace, and of power,
Was working great wonders and signs among the people.

The Twelve were the only accredited teachers *with authority*. But as these early believers were such by conviction, and not by convention, many of them were keenly desirous of helping to bring in others. This

does not imply any usurpation of Apostolic authority. This zeal for converting others may be seen in the rise of all the Non-Conformist bodies in the seventeenth and eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Conviction nearly always produces zeal. There is no necessity for *confining* the words " wonders and signs " to the working of what we call miracles. Stephen's very zeal was a " sign " of his convinced and convincing faith, and it " worked wonders " among those with whom he conversed. His chief opportunities for this work of faith would be found among the congregation of the synagogue which he usually attended on the Sabbath. This was the " Libystine-Cyrenian-Alexandrian " Synagogue ; [1] which was attended by Hellenists from the coasts of the Levant ; [2] including (Luke notes) Hellenists from Cilicia, the domicile of " Saul of Tarsus." Stephen was a man far in advance of his acquaintances in the matter of Catholicity, or **the World-wide Gospel of JHVH.**

His ' advanced ' views soon brought him into collision with orthodox Low-Jews ; and, probably, with Saul himself.

DISPUTATIONS IN THE L.C.A. SYNAGOGUE

9 But there arose certain of them who were of the synagogue called
(The synagogue) of the Libystines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and (the Province of) Asia,
Disputing with Stephen.
10 And they were finding themselves unable to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he used to speak.

The disputations arose from Stephen's ' advanced '

[1] See p. 11 [2] See Map, p. 279.

interpretations of Old Testament Scripture. He realised, as perhaps no other Jew did then, that The Messiah had come (to the Jews indeed first, but also) with a Gospel from God to the whole world.

It is evident that the disputations were very acrimonious.

Both Stephen, and those with whom he disputed, were firmly convinced of the truth of their own views.

His opponents were unable to reply with effect to his knowledge and interpretation of Scripture, and were antagonised by the imperious spirit with which he promulgated his ' advanced ' doctrines.

[He must certainly be reported to the Sanhedrin !
This crazy bigot shall not convince them !]

Not many converts are won to Christ by argument. HIS LIFE is what " convicts of sin, and righteousness, and judgment " ; and IT convinces of Divine Love.

ATTACK ON STEPHEN

11 Then they suborned men, who said,
We have heard him speaking blasphemous words,
Against Moses, and
Against God.
12 (*a*) And they stirred up " the people," and
(*b*) The presbyters, and the scribes.
(*c*) And they came upon him, and seized him,
(*d*) And brought him to the Sanhedrin.
13 And they set up false witnesses, who said,
This man ceaseth not to speak words against
(*a*) This holy place, and
(*b*) The Law.
14 For we have heard him saying that
(*a*) This Joshua the Nazoræan will destroy this place,

(*b*) And he will change the customs which Moses delivered unto us.

We first observe that Stephen is not charged, as The Twelve were, with preaching the fact that Joshua the Nazoræan is The Messiah, nor with preaching about His Resurrection.

At the date at which we have arrived, such charges were 'past history.'

The High-Jew party was established as one of the Jewish sects, and they had gained adherents even from the Broad-Jew Priests.

(Verse 11) The first action of Stephen's opponents is to get men to go about the city, saying that Stephen is preaching against Moses, and therefore, preaching against God.

(Verse 12) (*a*) No report could be more certain to inflame the minds of the inhabitants of Jerusalem against him than this. The Twelve had gained their ascendancy over the minds of "the people" principally by their unvarying reliance on the Writings of Moses and the Prophets.

(Verse 11) Stephen **is reported** to be speaking against The Law of Moses. And as Moses received The Law from God, such utterances are against JHVH.

Hence "the people," who had supported The Twelve against the Broad-Jews, are becoming incensed against Stephen.

(Verse 12) (*b*) Then reports are made to the leading Presbyters and Scribes, especially those of the Low-Jew party. These reports are probably made direct to them by Saul, who is prominent among them, and who is most "zealous for the traditions of his fathers." [1]

(Verse 12) (*c*) A small crowd of Jews is got together ;

[1] Gal. 1. 14.

and, without any formal arrest by officials, they seize Stephen in the street,

(Verse 12) (*d*) Hurry him before the High Court of the Sanhedrin, at a time when it is in session, and make their charges.

(Verse 13) (*a*) That he speaks against this holy place.

(Verse 13) (*b*) That he speaks against " The Law."

(Verse 14) (*a*) That he declares that The Temple will be destroyed by Joshua the Nazoræan.

(Verse 14) (*b*) That Joshua will abrogate The Law of Moses.

These charges are most formidable ; and if substantiated, must issue in sentence of death-by-stoning, for blasphemy, and for high treason against The Nation,[1] and The Nation's God.

Looking back from the twentieth century, we see that these charges come under the description of that ' half-truth ' which is more difficult to meet than a downright lie.

Stephen probably taught that

(*a*) This holy city of Jerusalem does not constitute *the full limit* of the presence of God.

(*b*) " The Law " is not perfect, nor eternal.

(*c*) Joshua the Nazoræan had said, " Destroy this Temple." (S. Matt. **26**. 61 ; S. John **2**. 19.)
[Not, " I will destroy."]

(*d*) Joshua the Nazoræan did say
" It was said by them of old time. . . .
But I say unto you. . . . " [2]

Saul heard the charges ; probably drew them up.

Paul carried on Stephen's teaching.

How will Stephen meet these serious charges, amounting to an indictment for high-treason ?

[1] See p. 36.

[2] S. Matt. **5**. 21, 27, 33, 38, 43.

CHAPTER H (A.D. 36)

STEPHEN BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN

THE FIRST IMPRESSION

15 And all those sitting in the Sanhedrin gazed at him,
And saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

My reader is glimpsing the halo at once as he gazes at a stained-glass Christian Martyr with a beautiful clean-shaven face. But we must try to turn away our eyes from that picture for a while, and look at ' the accused,' who is more probably an elderly, hook-nosed Jew with a beard.

The Jewish presentation of an angel was not one of the gentle beings often portrayed in Christian Art. An angel was a messenger from the awe-full JHVH, bringing a message of wrath as often as a message of consolation.

We may picture Stephen, at this moment, inspired by THE HOLY SPIRIT, full of zeal for the message he had to deliver ; feeling that he was a successor of the Prophets of old time, and was being treated as they had been treated. His eyes flash against the venom of the half-truths that are worse than lies, and his countenance glows with enthusiasm as he stands there,

A champion of The Truth, to do battle for The Lord.

Saul was one of those who " gazed " at him from his seat in the Sanhedrin. And there can be little doubt that it was Paul who pictured the martyr for S. Luke ; or, that this was another of the " pricks " of the goad

against which he "kicked." Furthermore, the remembrance of this speech could never fade from his mind. We need search no further for S. Luke's 'source,' in this account. In the Aramaic touches we can sometimes hear Paul's very words.

Stephen's speech was Paul's 'text' throughout the remainder of his life. His Epistles to the Galatians, and Romans are commentaries on portions of Acts 7. 1–50. And a still fuller commentary is the Epistle to the Hebrews. But do not forget that Saul saw something very different from a halo that day; whatever he may have seen when he was Paul.

PRISONER, WHAT HAVE YOU TO SAY?

7. 1 And the high-priest said,
Are these things so?

Just at first, it seems as though Stephen will have a fairer trial than his Master, or The Twelve. At least, no animus against him by the High-Priest is indicated.

STEPHEN'S REPLY

To many a twentieth-century-Christian, the first perusal of this Speech conveys something like a sense of boredom.[1]

This man, on trial for his life, delivers what seems to be a mere resumé of early Jewish history.

Some indeed have thought that the frenzied scene narrated in verse 54, was caused solely by Stephen's invective in verses 51–53.

But we must have some regard for **proportion.**

Would an English congregation, who had listened to an hour's dull sermon on English Church History, suddenly make a rush with one accord at the preacher,

[1] The editor speaks feelingly.

hurry him out, and stone him to death, because at the end of it he called them 'benighted heathen'? They might vow they would never listen to him again; but the invective would for most of them only raise a contemptuous smile.

Now the reason that this speech appears to some of us merely a tedious historical sketch, is just this—

We are **Christians** and living at a far later date.

Were we **Jews** of either the first or the twentieth century, we should hear, or read it, with a very different feeling.

But in order to get a realisation of what the speech *sounded* like that day, let us read an imaginary speech, as reported in the newspapers, made in June 1918, when the Germans had nearly broken our line.

A VERBAL CARICATURE, A.D. 1918

A certain Fritz Müller, who said he was of English nationality, was yesterday arraigned on a charge of high treason, before Mr. Justice Blank. On being asked if he had any defence to make, the accused said:

My friends, (Murmurs. Why doesn't he address the court properly?) You ask me what I have been saying about our country of England.

("*Our* country" indeed!

"But they say he calls himself English."

"So much the worse. Why has he got a German name?")

I will tell you.

We sing 'Britons never shall be slaves.' That may be all right for Britons; but we are English, who the Britons from this land of freedom dispossessed. We ourselves came from Germany (Murmurs) from the swamps round the mouth of the Elbe. Before many years had passed, we came under the rule of Danish

Kings. These were followed by Norman invaders, who allowed us on the land which they owned, to live. When the Norman line to an end came, we submitted to the Plantagenets from Anjou in France. (Dissent.) As these frenchmen became anglicised, they produced some kings whose names were John, Edward II., and Richard II., whom the great English Nation has always delighted to honour; also, Richard I. and Edward III., who spent their time plundering the territory of others, in Palestine and France. (Hisses.) At last we find some real English Kings on the throne, who called themselves Lancastrians and Yorkists, the last being Richard Crookback. They deluged the land with blood, through their constant civil warfare. So the English turned to Wales for a monarch strong enough to keep order, and Wales gave us the Tudor line. When this died out, Scotland provided the Stuart line for the never-to-be-conquered English. Then Holland sent us Dutch William, and Germany first the Hannoverian line, and then the House of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. (Sensation.) Once again in your history, you shall a ruler from another nation have. (Hang him!) You will be prevented from further plundering. You stole this England from the Britons, you have tried to steal France, you stole North America from the Indians, Australia from the Blacks, South Africa from the Dutch, India from the Hindoos. (Loud and continued interruption.) You benighted, ignorant, heathen schweinhunds, you are just the robbers your fathers were, and it is well that at last the Kaiser shall arrive to teach you Kultur.

The Jury returned their verdict, without retiring.

What is incorrect in this history? There may be an inaccuracy or two. But that would not weigh much with the Jury!!

AN ACTUAL SPEECH, A.D. 36

Will you now take your seats, in imagination, in the Sanhedrin. For a few minutes imagine yourselves to be Jewish Nobles, who can trace back your genealogies without a break, for thirteen hundred years, to Abraham.[1] You and your Nation are "The Elect"[2] of GOD, and the only "Elect" in the world. You are zealous for JHVH; intensely patriotic; lovers and students of the Bible, as it stood in A.D. 36.[3]

Remember, that the hated enemies and oppressors of your Nation have been the inhabitants of Chaldæa, Babylon, Mesopotamia, Assyria, Egypt; and in a lesser degree, but even more hatefully, the peoples of Midian and Edom.

Remember, that to you, living in A.D. 36, GOD is not the Creator of the-Universe-which-A.D.-1925-knows.

He is a Greater Cæsar.

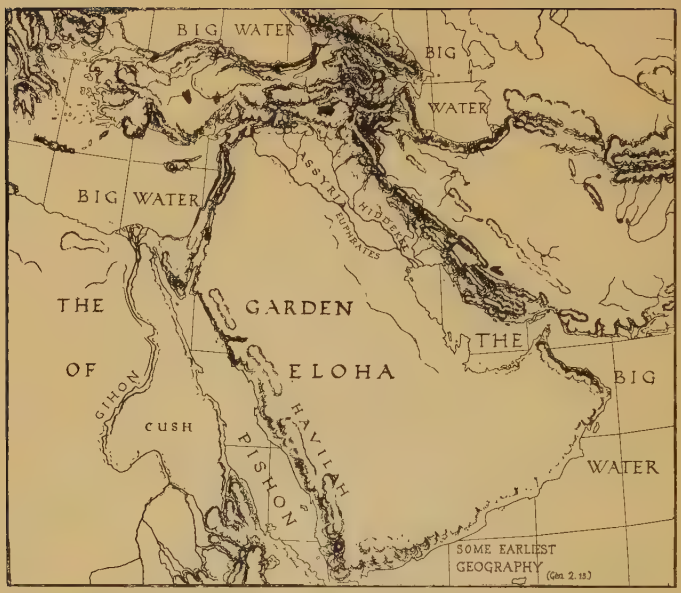
Israel has been faithful to Him for four hundred years. He must be faithful to her. To you as a Jew, it is unthinkable that JHVH should show favour indiscriminately to other nations.

He is the Great King. Israel is His Queen.[4]

Others may be admitted as petitioners at His Court; but no others may occupy Israel's position.

Read once again: S. Luke **4.** 25–29, where Luke tells us of the one occasion, before Holy Week, when Our Lord was in imminent danger of His life. And then **Forget** as far as possible all that the Christianity of nineteen centuries has taught you, and try to feel yourself a bigoted Jew, with a prisoner (bearing no halo, but with a Gentile name) standing before you for

[1] S. Matt. **1.** 1–16.
[2] Or, "Chosen."
[3] The Old Testament.
[4] Canticles. Is. **54.** 5; **62.** 5.


BIG WATER
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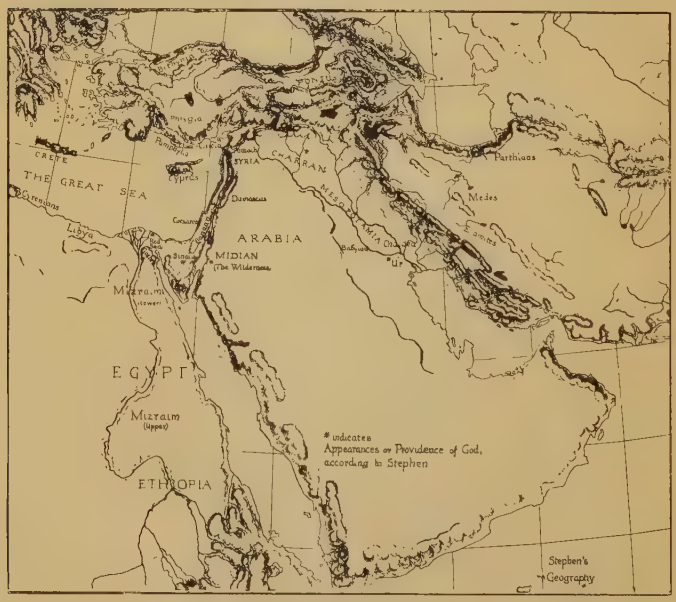
BIG WATER
ASSYRIA
HIDDEKEL
EUPHRATES
THE
GARDEN
OF
ELOHA
THE
BIG
GIHON
CUSH
HAVILAH
PISHON
WATER
SOME EARLIEST
GEOGRAPHY
(Gen. 2. 15.)


Phrygia
Pamphylia
CRETE
THE GREAT SEA
Cyrenians
Libya
Cyprus
SYRIA
CHARRAN
Damascus
Parthians
Medes
Elamites
ARABIA
MIDIAN
(The Wilderness)
Ur
Mizraim
(Lower)
EGYPT
Mizraim
(Upper)
ETHIOPIA
* indicates
Appearances or Providence of God,
according to Stephen
Stephen's
Geography

[*To face p.* 133.

judgment, on the indictment stated above; and listen to his speech.

THE SPEECH

Words in brackets ( ) indicate what is either Stephen's meaning, **or,** what Saul, and you, his Jewish hearers, **think** is his unspoken meaning.

7. 2 And he said,
Brethren and Fathers, hearken!

An almost impertinent lack of manners,[1] and particularly from a man bearing a Gentile name, unless he is an old man of high rank and standing.

APPEARANCES OF GOD OUTSIDE THE HOLY LAND

GOD APPEARS TO ABRAHAM

The GOD *of Glory* appeared to our father Abraham
when he was in **Mesopotamia,**
(Where he was in a heathen land)
Before he dwelt in **Charran** (another heathen land),
3 *And said unto him,*
Get thee out of thy land,
And from among thy (heathen) *kindred,*
And come into the land which I shall show thee.
4 Then came he out of the land of the **Chaldeans** (Babylonians)
And dwelt in **Charran** (of the Assyrians). (Not in Palestine.)
And from thence, after the death of his father, HE removed him into this land in which ye now dwell.
(GOD forced him to go.)
5 And *He did not give* him inheritance in it,
No, not so much as a footprint.

[1] Cf. Acts 4. 8.

And he promised that *He would give it to him in possession,*
And to his seed after him,
When he had no child.
6 And GOD spake thus,
That his *seed should sojourn* (and become heathen) *in a strange land,*
And they should enslave and persecute them for four hundred years.
7 *And the nation to whom they shall be enslaved, will I judge* **(rule over)** [1] said GOD ;
And after that they shall come forth and worship ME *in this* place.
(Instead of that they worshipped Baals.)
8 HE gave him *a covenant, of circumcision ;*
And so he begat Isaac and *circumcised him on the eighth day ;*
And Isaac begat Jacob.
(They were faithful to JHVH and His Covenant.)
And Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs.
9 And the patriarchs *were bitterly jealous of Joseph*
(The flower of the flock)
And sold him into **Egypt**
(For a slave to heathens).
And GOD *was with him* **there,**
10 And delivered him out of all his afflictions
(Into which the patriarchs had sold him),
And gave him favour,
And evidence of wisdom,
Before **Pharaoh, King of Egypt,**
And he appointed him Governor over **Egypt,**
And over all his (heathen) *house.*

[1] The early rulers of the Israelites were called Judges. The word implies that the Egyptians also were GOD's people.

But his twelve brothers in the Holy Land came to penury.

11 *There came a famine over all* **Egypt and Canaan,**
and great distress.
And our fathers found no sustenance.
12 *But Jacob heard that* **there was corn in Egypt,**
(In spite of the famine, by God's provision through Joseph),
And sent our fathers out (there) for the first time.
13 And then he sent them a second time,
When Joseph was made known **(as an Egyptian Ruler)** *to his brethren ;*
And Joseph's family were introduced to **The Pharaoh,**
(And bowed humbly before this heathen king.)
14 And Joseph (the prime minister of **Egypt**)
Sent and called his father Jacob and all his kindred,
Seventy-five in number,
(To leave the Holy Land, and become Goshenites for two centuries.)

And why not ? Stephen had gone to Egypt, prospered in Alexandria, amassed wealth, and was now come back to use it for the poor of Jerusalem. The great majority of Jews were even then living in heathen lands, because the Holy Land was not large enough to contain them ; and these Hellenists were doing very well.

(Twentieth-century note.) The Hyksos *kings* were The Nation's *nursing-fathers*, and an Egyptian *Queen* was Moses's *nursing-mother*. (Is. **49.** 23.)

15 So *Jacob went down into* **Egypt,** *and ended his days there,*
(In heathen surroundings) as did our fathers (the twelve patriarchs).

16 *And they were carried over unto Shechem*, (in **Samaria**)
And laid *in the tomb which Abraham bought* for a sum of money *from the sons of Hamor in Shechem* (in **Samaria**).

Consequently, the tombs of the Jewish ancestors were defiled by the semi-heathen, bitterly hated, Samaritans.

17 But as the time of the promise was drawing nigh,
Which GOD vouchsafed to Abraham,
The Nation *grew and multiplied* in **Egypt**,
(Prosperous and quite satisfied with their land, and relapsing into heathenism),
18 Until *there arose another king over Egypt*,

This was a restoration of the line of native Egyptian kings, after the overthrow of the intruding Semitic Hyksos Dynasty. (Tut-ankh-Amen may have been a member of this dynasty.)

Who knew not Joseph.

But hated his memory, because Joseph was of Semitic race, as were the Hyksos.

19 *He 'tricked' our race, and persecuted* our ancestors, by making them cast out their male infants, so that *they might not propagate the race.*

MOSES

20 And at that time Moses was born and was *fair* to God ; [1]
And he was nourished *for* **three months** in his father's home,
21 Then he was **cast out** (as the Pharaoh ordered)
And Pharaoh's daughter took him up [2]
And educated him *as her own son*.[3]

[1] An Aramaic expression implying " A beautiful child."
[2] The word implies " as a foundling."
[3] Of soi-disant Egyptian birth.

22 So Moses was instructed in all the (heathen) wisdom of **Egyptians ;**
And he was mighty in his (Egyptian) words, and (Egyptian) works.

This continued for about **forty years.**

MOSES'S FIRST ATTEMPT

23 But as he was well-nigh forty years of age,
It came into his heart (at last) to visit *his brethren the Children of Israel* (in their slavery).

Driving down in his chariot,

24 And seeing one of them unjustly treated,
He defended the man who was being ill-used,
And smote the Egyptian.

25 For he was supposing that the brethren would understand that God, by his hand, was giving them deliverance,

As soon as he came to be the Pharaoh,

But they did not understand.

26 And the following day he appeared [on the scene]
As two of them were fighting,
And was making them to be at peace, saying,
Men, you are brothers, why do ye injure one another ?

27 *But the one who was wronging his neighbour* pushed him away, saying,
Who made thee a ruler and a judge of ours ?

Go and rule your own Egyptians !

28 *Do you want to kill me, as you killed the Egyptian yesterday ?*

29 *And Moses had to flee, because of this report,*
And he became a sojourner in the country of **Midian,**

Where he (married a heathen wife, and) begat two sons.

GOD APPEARS TO MOSES

30 And when (a second) forty years were full-filled
(Through that refusal), *there appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount* Sinai
(In the country of **Midian**)
An Angel, in a flame of fire in a bush.

31 And Moses, seeing it, was wondering at the sight.
And as he drew near to behold,
The VOICE of THE LORD came,

32 I AM *the* GOD *of thy fathers, the* GOD *of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob.*
And Moses becoming trembling, was not daring to behold.

After eighty years in heathen surroundings Moses did not even know GOD'S NAME. [See Exod. **3.** 13.]

33 *But* JHVH *said to him,*
Loose the shoe from off thy feet,
For the place on which thou standest is Holy Ground.

Holy Ground! In the Country of **Midian.**

34 *Seeing I saw* [1] *the affliction of My people in Egypt,*
And I heard their groaning, and I came down to deliver them (forty years ago).
And now come, I will send thee into Egypt.

35 This was the Moses whom they refused (forty years before), saying,
Who made thee a ruler and a judge?
He it was whom GOD sent as ruler and redeemer,
With the hand of the Angel who appeared to him in the bush.

[1] Aramaic phraseology.

God has now sent the Second Moses, as King and Redeemer.

36 This man led them forth,
And worked *wonders and signs*
In **Egypt,**
And in the **Red Sea,**
And **in the wilderness**
(During a third) *forty years.*

Forty years a heathen Egyptian.

Forty years in heathen Midian, with a heathen wife, and uncircumcised children.

A sudden conversion, through the VISION of JHVH.

Forty years in the wilderness.

And then refused admission to the Holy Land.

37 This is that Moses,
Who said to the Children of Israel,
A Prophet shall GOD *raise up unto you,*
From among your brethren,
As He raised up me.[1] (Joshua the Nazoræan is That Prophet).

38 This is he who was in the [Jewish] Church [2] **in the wilderness ;**
(Is HE in the Temple? No Shekinah is seen there !)
With the Angel who spoke to him in Mount Sinai,
And who was with our ancestors.
He received living oracles [Words of Life] to give to us.

UNFAITHFULNESS TO MOSES

39 He it was to whom our (heathen) ancestors would not be obedient,
But thrust [3] him from them,
And in their hearts *turned back into* **Egypt.**

[1] See Acts 3. 22, 23. [2] Or, Congregation. [3] As in verse 27.

AND TO GOD

40 *Saying unto Aaron,*
Make us gods which shall go before us ;
For as for this Moses, who brought us (to **this** place !) *out of the land of* **Egypt** (where we had food in plenty), *we know not what has happened to him.*

41 *And they made a calf* in those days,
And *brought sacrifice* to the idol,
And were holding festival in the sight (!) of the works of their own hands.

42 So GOD turned,
(Again and again, for they were stubborn heathen) and gave them up to serve *the host of* the stars of *the heaven.*
According as it is written in the Book of the Prophets,[1]
Did ye offer unto ME *slain beasts and sacrifices*
Forty years in the wilderness, O House of Israel?

43 (Nay,) *ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch,*
And the star of the god Rephan,
The figures which ye made, to worship them,
And I will carry you away, beyond Babylon.[2]

(Twentieth-century note.) Questions about Orthodox *v.* Modernist belong to 'Another story.' Unquestionably, *Saul* took the Pentateuch literally.

The questions of

(*a*) Stephen's correctness of quotation,
(*b*) The compilation of J, E, P,[3] etc.,
(*c*) The whole truth of Old Testament history,

[1] See p. 11.
[2] Amos 5. 25–27, with an intentional change of ending. The expression implies "outside the civilised world."
[3] See any modern commentary on Genesis.

are entirely negligible on our first reading of Stephen's speech.

Whatever views we of the twentieth century may hold about (*a*), (*b*), (*c*), above, the only important thing *to Saul* was that he believed in the Old Testament history, as true history, as sacred history, as the history of a sacred people.

THE TENT

44 It was the tent of the Testimony,[1]
Which was in **the wilderness** for our fathers ;
Made just as *He-Who-spake-to-Moses* commanded,
To make it after the pattern which he had seen.[2]

45 And that tent our fathers, when their turn came, brought,
When they entered with Joshua *into* **the possession of the Gentiles,** whom GOD thrust out before the face of our fathers.
Until we come to the days of David.

That is, This brings us to the days of David.

46 He found favour in the sight of GOD,
And asked permission *to find a Tabernacle for the* GOD *of Jacob.*

That is, ' a really magnificent Tent.'

47 *But Solomon built him* **a house.**

Despite the flatteries of the Queen of Sheba, Solomon's Temple, perched on the top of a rock, measuring about 90 feet by 30 feet (1 Kings **6.** 2), must have appeared a mere ' house ' to those who had seen the temples standing in Solomon's day at Thebes, and elsewhere. Their very ruins still astonish us of the twentieth century.

Stephen had probably seen these ruins.

[1] " *The Tent* " in which was the Shekinah, or " Glory-Cloud," " *over the Mercy-Seat* " ; bearing " Testimony " to the Presence of GOD. Exod. **29.** 43, 44 ; **40.** 34, 35 ; Lev. **16.** 2.

[2] See Exod. **25.** 40 ; **26.** ; **36.**–**39.**

THE THOUGHT IN STEPHEN'S MIND

" We who have lived in Egypt know what a Temple is. It is something twenty times the size of this of yours ; and is the empty hand-made habitation of a non-existent god.

" You, who never left this provincial town, think your Temple, as you call it, the most magnificent building in the world. You could put it into an Egyptian Temple, and lose it !

" Solomon spent seven years building God's house, and thirteen years building his own palace. The heathen Egyptian Pharaohs devoted far greater energies to building temples, than to building palaces.

" You overvalue your house, and you undervalue your GOD.

" You have no eyes to see HIS TEMPLE, in which the whole circle of the sky is merely His Throne, and this solid earth is just His Footstool."

Advanced Astronomy . . . Stephen's !

48 But the Most High doth not dwell in hand-made habitations.
As the prophet saith,
49 *The heaven is My Throne,*
And the earth the footstool of My Feet.
What sort of house can ye build for ME ? *saith the* LORD ;
Or what resting-place for ME ?
50 *Did not My Hand make all these ?*

For Saul, the goad-" pricks " have been continuous ; and he is " kicking " throughout the whole speech.

The italic type above shows us at a glance that Stephen, like The Twelve, uses the Old Testament Scriptures

with marvellously accurate knowledge, and with conspicuous ability.

But his **choice** of quotation, is far different from theirs.

Although the whole speech consists of quotations joined together by his own words ; and although in his own words there is nothing which his hearers can say is untrue ; yet it is constructed so skilfully, that by it he is exciting his audience to frenzy, and yet they cannot attack his statements at any point.

We realise the force of Luke's words : " they were not able to withstand the wisdom and Spirit by which he spake " (Acts **6.** 10).

The speech of Fritz Müller, crudely put together above, serves as a caricature of Stephen's skill, and pictures an idea for English Christian readers.

But Fritz Müller's speech is venomous, and intentionally so.

There is no **venom** in Stephen's speech.

But every hearer that day took it so ; not realising that the only venom was in their own hearts.

Through years to come Paul bitterly repented of Saul's venom that day.

So far from being a traitor to The Nation, Stephen has their truest interest at heart, and magnifies The Nation's GOD.

But his is a character like that of some of the Old Testament prophets ; and he has read again and again their messages, couched in terms of severest denunciation.

He has refrained from denunciation up to this point ; until he has built up a case by his wisdom, which they cannot gainsay.

He has taken the course which the Old Testament prophets took ; he has " *told the House of Jacob of the sins* " of their forefathers.

The fate which those prophets suffered from the Israelites of their days, he is about to suffer from his present audience.

They will not allow him to begin to speak of their own sins ; or to state the conclusions which he would now draw from the history.

Stephen had been showing quite clearly in his synagogue-disputations what his own deductions were from these passages which he is now quoting. But the Hellenists would not listen to new readings of the old Scriptures.

Down with such ' infidel ' teaching !

In his speech to the Sanhedrin Stephen recognises the futility of trying to teach his views to hoary-headed Rabbis if the more broad-minded, and travelled, Hellenists refuse to listen. All he can do is to reiterate the texts on which he has based his teaching, and say, ' Is not this the Scripture ? '

They know perfectly well some of the meaning which underlies his selections from Scripture. Full reports have been constantly made to them, by Saul and others, for weeks.

He has been teaching that GOD is the God of the whole world. That GOD'S presence is not confined to any particular country, or any particular building. That The Lord taught that " The Law " must be kept in the spirit, rather than in the letter.

All this is unorthodox and heretical, and they will have none of it.

How bigoted these first-century folk were !

GOD AND THE LAND

To Saul and the Sanhedrin :

Stephen appears as having collected together a mass of quotations to show how GOD's Presence had been manifested far more outside the Holy Land than in it.

The words in **Clarendon** type will help us of the Twentieth Century, to see this more clearly.

Stephen told them how GOD called their ancestors out of the heathen world, and had appeared in Babylonia, Midian, and other hated lands.

Stephen means to show that

Wherever " The Elect " had been ; in *any* countries ; there JHVH had watched over them, and had raised up deliverers, and pardoned their sins.

To us Christians

This brings the assurance of God's Universal Presence ; and this speech is, for us, the Advent of Catholicity.

Christian Believers, through nineteen centuries, have been learning very slowly that GOD is The Father of the whole human race, and not only of those who deem themselves His favourites.

A league of the nations, and a unity of the classes; appear to some to be the possibilities of practical politics which Stephen and Paul envisaged.

But they can only come when the spirit of Catholicity, (not Catholicism) has filled all men with the true conception of the Brotherhood of Man through the Fatherhood of GOD.

As Saul heard.	*As Stephen meant.*
The Holy Land was not always theirs.	'Lands' are unimportant.
Abraham did not possess a foot of what GOD promised him.	What of that? He was called "*The Friend of* GOD."
The Nation lived in a heathen land for 400 years after Abraham.	And GOD watched over, and prospered them there.
The jealousy of the Patriarchs caused this change of land.	GOD overruled the consequences of their sin.
JHVH sanctioned it by His presence with Joseph, whom HE caused to become an Egyptian ruler.	(?) Israel's first chance to commence the conversion of the world to JHVH.
Jacob and the Twelve Patriarchs went to the heathen land of Goshen partly of their own accord, partly because JHVH'S providence gave a relief to Egypt from the famine, which HE did not give to Canaan.	There they grew and multiplied in peace and security, such as they could not have known among the Canaanites, Hittites, Jebusites, etc.
The burial place of Abraham and Jacob was in the territory of the hated Samaritans, and Abraham had had to **buy** it from heathen Hittites.	Both Abraham and Jacob are in JHVH's safe keeping; and pious Jews look for rest in "Abraham's bosom."
Palestine was a possession of heathen Gentiles, until the days of David.	Had the Nation done much better *since* those days?

Had Stephen constructed a chronological table, it might have stood somewhat as below :

The Chosen People were :

In Egypt	400 years	And JHVH watched over them all the time, in every place, wherever they were, and gave them opportunity to teach the knowledge of Him to the heathen world.
In the Wilderness	40 years	
Sharing Palestine with heathen	160 years	
In full possession and rule	300 years	
In Judæa only	40 years	
In Babylon	70 years	
In Judæa and Galilee under heathen Kings	540 years [1]	

DISOBEDIENCE

Again and again had the Nation been put out from GOD's favour by disobedience. But HE did not cease to regard them as His People.

REJECTION

The patriarchs rejected Joseph.

Their descendants rejected Moses, and that more than once.

They received " The Law," and they rejected that.

They rejected GOD, again and again.

MOSES AND THE LAW

" The Law " was given in heathen Midian.

Moses got his learning from the heathen Egyptians.

[1] Accuracy or inaccuracy of dates, or departures from verbal correctness of quotation, weighed nothing with Saul that day as he listened in horrified amazement. Saul did not go home to discuss with Gamaliel the interesting question whether GOD appeared to Abraham first in Ur, or in Mesopotamia ; or whether the reading Rephan was to be preferred to Chiun.

The speech has often been treated almost as though Stephen had been reading to the Sanhedrin, as he turned over the pages of the A.V. of King James of pious memory.

Their ancestors had broken The Law by their heathen idolatry, during many centuries. Moses told them to obey the " Second Moses," " *That Prophet*," when He came ; and they crucified Him almost as soon as He appeared.

THE TEMPLE

GOD commanded that " a tent " should be used for His worship.

David wanted to make *a new one*.

Solomon built " a House," and was reproved by the prophets.

He might have gone on to tell how Solomon's Temple was destroyed, Zerubbabel's Temple had gone, and the present one had been built principally by Herod *an Edomite !*

THE GOAD IS PRICKING SEVERELY

But the clouds which have been gathering, blacker and blacker, now burst, and a tempest of wrath rages, before he can speak of the coming destruction of the present Temple.[1]

Amid furious gesticulations, and angry shouts, he is heard, still quoting the Prophets, to say all that they will allow him to say further.

THE END OF THE SPEECH

51 *Stiff necked and uncircumcised in hearts and ears,*
Ye do always resist THE HOLY SPIRIT.
As your fathers did, so do ye.
52 Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute ?
And they killed them which showed beforehand of the coming of The Righteous One ;

[1] This destruction occurred after Luke wrote this, his second volume.

Of Whom ye have now become betrayers and murderers.

53 Ye who received " The Law," as it was ordained by angels (messengers), and kept it not.

The few words which we hear give us a hint of other quotations which he would have made; and of the deductions he would have drawn, had they allowed him to complete his speech.

THE STORM

54 Now while they were hearing the speech,
They felt as though their hearts were being sawn through,[1]
And they were gnashing their teeth at him.

They gnashed their teeth, because they could not use their tongues. What could they say, against a list of quotations from the Scripture? He does not insert a single argument of his own. Yet, the whole time, his *apparent* argument has been sawing at their hearts, and rousing them to frenzy.

[The Goad is sawing, not only " pricking."]

GOD APPEARS TO STEPHEN

55 Now, being full of THE HOLY SPIRIT,
He gazed into the heaven,
And saw the GLORY of GOD,
And JESUS standing at the right hand of GOD.

56 And he said Lo, I behold the heavens opened,
And the SON OF MAN standing at the right hand of GOD.

[1] As in Chap. 5. 33.

THE TORRENT

At this, the tempest becomes a rushing, roaring torrent which sweeps everything before it.

We, of the twentieth century, have heard verse 56 so often that we only realise how it sounds in *our* ears.

But how did it sound that day ?

Picture a Presbyterian standing before the Star Chamber, and declaring that he saw John Knox on God's Throne !

They took their religion very seriously in the first, and in the sixteenth, centuries !

The members of the Sanhedrin knew whom he meant by the Son of Man : that ' Galilean carpenter,' whom they had persuaded Pilate to crucify !

A crucified carpenter on the Throne of God !

No wonder that the tempest produced a torrent.

No wonder that those august Senators were suddenly transformed into a mob of infuriated fanatics.

None can think of a proposal to take a vote ; of *sentencing* this outrageous blasphemer to death.

And then waiting till the sentence is confirmed (or contemptuously rejected) by Pontius Pilate !

57 They cried out with a loud voice ;
Stopped their ears ;
Rushed upon him with one accord ;
58 Cast him outside the city ;
And stoned him.

Headed by Saul, one of the coming members of the Sanhedrin, the mob of spectators in the court rush their victim out of the city, and soon

THE LORD WELCOMES HIS FIRST MARTYR.

No need this time for the priests to fear any unpopu-

larity with " the people," for the mob has taken the law into its own hands.

No need, either, to fear any awkward question about breach of law, from the Procurator.

' No sentence was passed ! ' ' The mob got out of hand ! '

Probably the bulk of the aged nobles go quietly home satisfied that ' justice will be done.'

One younger disciple, however (aged between thirty and forty), has the courage of his opinions, and publicly presides at this execution-according-to-" The-Law-of-Moses."

58 And the witnesses laid down their garments at
the feet of
A young man named Saul.

It was an enactment of the Jewish Law, that when sentence of death-by-stoning was carried out, those who had given the evidence on which the sentence was based, should be the first to cast the great stones. Thus they publicly avowed their own liability to the death-sentence, if their evidence proved to be false, and so a miscarriage of justice had occurred. These witnesses removed their flowing jibbehs, and Saul, the young Pharisee Noble, evinces his full agreement with the justice of the execution, by publicly taking charge of these garments.[1]

THE PROTO-MARTYR

59 So they were stoning Stephen
As he was calling-upon-himself [2] [The Name]
And saying, Lord Joshua, receive my spirit.
60 And he knelt down, and cried with a loud voice,
Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.
And saying this, he fell asleep.

[1] Cf. Acts 22. 20. [2] Cf. Acts 22. 16.

CHAPTER I

GOD THE SON

To our eyes that picture, although so terrible, is filled with the beauty of the martyr's crowning.

In Saul's eyes, it was the execution of a blasphemer blaspheming to the end, and dying with a hypocritical prayer on his lips.

It is difficult for us to-day to get the view from his standpoint. But imagine a follower of the Wesleys, being stoned to death by a mob early in the nineteenth century, kneeling down and praying aloud, "Lord Wesley, receive my spirit."

We can then realise to some extent how Stephen's words sounded that day.

But let us imagine further.

Could Wesleyanism have ever survived the awful shock which such words would have given to every Methodist?

Every time that the name of Wesleyan was heard, it would recall that dreadful scene.

Why then has the name of JESUS sounded fitting in the martyr's prayer, through all the Christian centuries?

There is but one answer,

JESUS is GOD.

His servant has been made like Him; and dies with the same prayer of pardon on his lips.

The three Apostles, Peter, James, and John, might have seen a glimpse of His Glory on the Mount of Transfiguration,[1] but to Saint Stephen was granted this first vision to human eyes of GOD THE SON standing by HIS Throne, to welcome HIS servant.

SECOND-CENTURY MYTHS?

What grounds have we for believing that this story of Luke's is based on ascertained fact?

That young man Saul could never forget the details of that memorable scene, if he were present. Paul tells us in some of his letters that he *was* the persecutor whom the next passage 7. 58 to 8. 4 describes.

As Paul, he had Luke for his close companion. And we can have little doubt that Paul practically dictated to Luke the whole of Stephen's speech as recorded, and also those verses 55, 56, 59, 60; which describe what Saul saw and heard with horror and rage; and which Paul recorded with a prayer for his own forgiveness.[2]

(*a*) Stephen and Saul are not second-century myths.

(*b*) Saul was a witness of Stephen's publicly declared Vision of The Lord, and thought it blasphemous.

(*c*) Saul himself declared that a few weeks later he had a similar Vision, and JESUS spoke to him.

(*d*) Saul immediately, and totally, changed his 'views.'

(*e*) Paul had Luke as a close friend for years, and cannot have failed to tell Luke his own experiences, how that

(*f*) Saul, as a stubborn Jewish ox, felt the goad again and again, and his zealous Jewish prejudices kicked against it.

(*g*) Paul in his letters, and by his constant witness

[1] S. Luke 9. 28. [2] 1 Tim. 1. 13–15; 1 Cor. 15. 9.

through bitter persecution, shows continually his belief in " GOD Manifest in Flesh." [1]

(*h*) What other conclusion can be drawn than this ?

JESUS IS GOD

GOD
Who appeared to
7. 2 Abraham in Mesopotamia,
30 Moses in Midian,
Appeared to
55 Stephen in the Sanhedrin.

[1] 1 Tim. 3. 16.

CHAPTER J (A.D. 36)

DISPERSION

WE GO BACK A FEW WEEKS

We may picture to ourselves this young Low-Jew Noble (lately appointed, on account of Gamaliel's record of his conspicuous ability, to a seat in the Sanhedrin), superciliously looking at one of these Galilean peasant-Rabbis, as he met him in the street, with a contemptuous stare of well-bred curiosity, and thinking to himself,

'How these Nazoræans persist in their curious delusions about Joshua.'

I should have thought they would have died a natural death long ago. Well, there is no accounting for the mind of "the people."

Caiaphas was well-advised to have Joshua put out of the way; but he need not have got that low-bred Pilate to do it.

We should certainly have had an attempt at making Joshua King of the Jews. They say he had a most extraordinary influence over his followers.

Could he, by any chance, be Messiah?

Saul, you are beside yourself! Your new honour is sending your wits wool-gathering!

I wonder what became of the body? I should not wonder if Pilate had something to do with that disappearance.

Yet no ; he is too fat and lazy for anything, unless he is put out. Then the highest of us is not safe.

Besides, the men at the Arimathean's tomb were from our own Temple Guard.[1] I can make nothing of it.

It would have been far better to have kept to " The Law," and have had him stoned.[2]

I hate that brutal, heathen crucifixion. It only panders to the bestial instincts of the mob.

EXECRATION OF THE HIGH-JEWS

But Saul is in very different mood when a prominent and influential Hellenist is openly proclaiming the coming end of Judaism.

8. 1 And Saul continued [for some weeks yet],
To approve of his execution.

How *could* Saul do otherwise ? He, poor Jewish ox, could not see any trace across the unploughed field of God's World-history. He could not see GOD's century-long furrow, along which he was being " goaded." Of course he " kicked." He was in the dark.

But The Light from Heaven will shine ere long.

At first his kicking is so furious that the ' clods of earth ' are scattered in all directions. And it is not Saul only who kicks. " The people " are maddened by the reports spread through the city, about the speech. And these reports lose nothing in the hundred-fold-repeated telling of them.

' High-Jews indeed ! '

' Stephen has revealed the plot you have been hatching against The Nation ! '

' You want to make out that " The Elect " have been, throughout our whole history, benighted heathen ! '

[1] S. Matt. 27. 65. [2] S. John 19. 36, 37.

8. 1 So there arose on that very day a great persecution against The Church

Which was [until then, only] in Jerusalem ;
And they were all dispersed abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria.

THE BURIAL

First, however, let us devoutly gather round the burial of that bruised and broken body.

2 And devout men helped in burying Stephen,
And made great lamentation over him.

He was not quite universally condemned. Some (may be of the L.-C.-A. synagogue [1]) though not convinced by his arguments, yet knew that his real teaching had been most venomously perverted. They were men of sufficient standing in the city, to insist on arranging for the interment of this formerly-highly-respected member of their congregation, with all the customary Jewish "great lamentation." [2]

THE DISPERSION

Every known High-Jew in the city has to run the gauntlet of howls, jeers, curses, stones, insults, blows, from his own neighbours that very day, and many other days following. The great majority flee for the shelter of incognito and obscurity in the Judæan villages.

Some, of greater prominence in the ' county ' (Judæa is not much more than that), have to take refuge from the storm in the neighbouring ' county ' of Samaria. Even Samaritan aversion is preferable to Judæan murder-threats.

Some again, perhaps, renounce their allegiance to the

[1] See p. 123.

[2] Such an interment and wailing as may be often seen and heard in Manchester in 1925. See Jer. 22. 18.

High-Jew party. But it is doubtful if their neighbours will *allow* them to forget it.

WHAT WILL PILATE SAY?

Jerusalem riots were always of constant occurrence ever since the days of the Maccabees.

But this one will not worry Pilate much.

So long as they are only ridding him of one of the many 'sects' which disturb that even tenour of life which he loves, let these Jews curse one another to their hearts' content!

The more of these turbulent Israelites are clapped into prison by their own rulers, and kept quiet there, the better!

Preachers throughout the Christian centuries have scolded Pilate, as though he were a semi-Christian; or, at least, as if he ought to have had a knowledge of the future history of the Christian Church.

He did not even know where this Joshua came from, and cared less!

What did it matter to him if one or more of these Pathans [1] were killed by their own friends?

Far better they should do the killing than bring their 'heretics' to him for a sentence.

Whatever he decided was sure to make him unpopular with one of their incomprehensible sects; and so cause complaint to be sent to Rome of his incapacity for maintaining order.

The salary of the Procuratorship was very useful in giving him those little luxuries he loved!

'Stoned a Jew they call Stephen, have they?'

'So much the better. There is one rioter less.'

[1] N.B.—This is neither a mark of twenty-first-century editing, nor a transcriber's error. And the author knows that Pathans live on the N.W. border of India. What a lot of trouble might have been saved, if the N.T. writers had used footnotes!

CHAPTER K (A.D. 36)

(8. 1.) EXCEPT THE APOSTLES

We had almost forgotten The Twelve.

What were they thinking, feeling, doing?

It is very difficult to get a view of them nineteen-centuries-off, even with a powerful imagination-telescope.

* * * * *

Let us ask our twelve Birmingham friends to help us to get a closer view.[1]

THE RIOT IN JEWISH BIRMINGHAM

One of the prominent converted-Jew followers of those twelve Christian clergy in Jewish Birmingham of whom we spoke, has been creating considerable disturbance among the congregation of 'Emmanuel Synagogue.' He has been proclaiming The Faith with the utmost zeal; but, perhaps, more discretion might have been used. His views are certainly far more 'advanced' than those of the twelve clergy. For years he has been accustomed, as the head of the firm 'Stephen & Co.' of Alexandria, to make decisions, and have his orders carried out unquestioningly. He is an old man now, wealthy, esteemed, imperious, who does not easily brook interference even from his Minister.

[1] See p. 119.

At last he has been seized by a band of men in the street, brought before the City Magistrates, and charged with using language which is likely to cause a breach of the peace.

Far from expressing contrition, he has repeated in the court the language complained of ; in the form of quotations from The Pentateuch, joined together by words of his own.

His speech so incensed the Birmingham Jews in court, that the police were swept aside, the prisoner was dragged from the Council House, and torn to pieces by an infuriated mob in the Bull Ring.

The twelve Christian clergy did not put in an appearance at the court. The whole affair was over within six hours.

Some members of the congregation of Emmanuel Synagogue carried the body from the Bull Ring, and arranged for the usual Jewish funeral.

That evening and the next day ' converted Jews ' in every street, and even in every ' court ' were mobbed by their neighbours.

(We are going to assume that Warwickshire and Cheshire are peopled by Jews, Staffordshire by Samaritans, and that all the rest of England and of the world is heathen ; with a sprinkling of Jews in all the leading towns of Europe. London is the seat of the heathen Government of the whole of England.)

What view would the twelve Christian clergy take about this catastrophe ?

Would they attend the funeral ?

Would they regard old Mr. Stephen as a martyr for The Faith ?

What would they feel about the scattering of their flocks, and the ' ruin ' (?) of their work ?

Mr. Stephen is **reported,** all over the City, to have told the congregation of ' Emmanuel ' :

(*a*) That Jews may just as well live in Germany (heathen) as in Birmingham.

(*b*) That the Pentateuch is as good as dead, for all the religious use that it has.

(*c*) That the Jewish Temple in the centre of the City will shortly be laid in ruins by the heathen Government in London.

(*d*) That Jesus Christ has put an end to all Old Tetsament teaching.

The majority of the 20,000 Christian converted-Jews in the City, gathered, baptised, confirmed, and organised, scatter for a time. Some of them go to the Warwickshire villages, some take refuge in hated Staffordshire.

Remember, these Birmingham Jews are the nucleus of the only people in the world who worship the One True God.

Will the twelve Christian clergy decide to divide Europe among them ? Will one go forthwith to Scotland, one to Ireland, one to the North of England, one to the South, one to France, and so on ?

Will they flee with their Christian adherents to the Warwickshire or Staffordshire villages ?

Will they take refuge in Jewish Cheshire where every one knows them ?

Or will they still go regularly to their usual synagogues, Sabbath by Sabbath ?

Mr. Saul Nemo, who publicly encouraged the mob in the Bull Ring, has armed himself with a Magistrates' Order, and is searching Birmingham house by house for ' Stephenites.' Any such found, are apprehended and imprisoned ; and stoned to death if they will not publicly curse Mr. Stephen, his tenets, and his memory.

We have said enough to indicate that the problem facing The Twelve was no easy one to solve. Can the reader solve this Birmingham one? But we twentieth-century Christians can now see how God was working out His Purpose for the salvation of the whole world.

" GOD moves in a mysterious way."

But HE performs HIS wonders.

* * * * *

Let us return to A.D. 36 in Jerusalem.

STEPHEN

What were the feelings of poor Stephen?

Were they much the same as the feelings of His Master, when " they all forsook Him and fled "?

The Twelve apparently were " not with him one hour " during that terrible scene in the Sanhedrin.

The Twelve were " slow of heart " to follow The Master in His interpretation of the Scriptures.

We cannot be surprised if they are slow to follow their own disciple's interpretations.

Stephen saw, and rightly saw, that this outwardly successful High-Jew party, as a popular Jewish Sect, must come to an end.

For " he was full of HOLY SPIRIT."

But he was in a hurry, and GOD never is.

He was, almost certainly, the first Jew except ONE, who could feel for humanity, and see JHVH as the God of all the nations on earth.

But " the new wine " of the Gospel, poured into " the old wine-skins " of Jew-Prophet-temperament, is sure to " burst the wine-skins, and they will be marred." They will not be ruined. The Master " *was marred more than any man.*" ' And He will make all His saints new.'

Also the " pricks " will have their destined effect, and Elijah will follow Elisha [1] in the Church of JESUS.

Stephen was the first to drink of The Master's Cup. The drink was deep, and to the dregs.

THE TWELVE

The Twelve too are drinking of the Cup.

A great tragedy for them lies almost hidden in those three words, " except the Apostles."

Let down, again and again, by their own followers ; with no sign of the promised Return of Messiah ; with no prospect of ' the Kingdom being restored to Israel ' ; they see now the Jewish Church and Nation bitterly hostile, their adherents scattered, their ' misguided dupes ' (!) in prison, and either apostatising or being killed.

This is the second great tragedy of Apostolic history. Their first high hopes were dashed to the ground at Calvary ; to-day they think they see the work for which they had laboured so zealously all these months, the edifice which they had so carefully built up for their Lord, shattered in ruin by the events of twenty-four hours.

And (so it seemed to them that day), ' by their own familiar friend whom they had trusted.'

We often think of the expression, ' drinking of the Master's Cup,' as implying death by martyrdom. It does mean that. But oftentimes there are many bitter draughts given through the words or acts of friends and followers (such as He often drank [2]), which must be tasted ere the dregs are drained.

Why did The Twelve not give up in despair ?

We should have done.

Because they too " are filled with HOLY SPIRIT."

[1] Not a copyist's error !

[2] " He came unto ' His Own,' and they received Him not."

THE UNIVERSAL GOSPEL

It is most important to remember that their life-work was *not only* to induce people to believe in the Resurrection of Joshua the Nazoræan. The work to be done by them and the Christian Church which they founded, was nothing less than the conversion of the whole world to The One True God.

An even greater task, at which we still have to toil to-day, is the implanting in the hearts of all men in the world the *knowledge* of JHVH [1] as HE is. Not only a God of All-Power, but a God of All-Love.

We shall begin to recognise the almighty power of THE HOLY SPIRIT in those men, who wore no halos in Jerusalem, when we reflect on their stupendous task. This was to try and convert the world to JHVH; when they had before them a prospect of the only Temple of JHVH being laid in ruins; when the People of JHVH were so hostile that we shall presently hear these Twelve Jews begin to speak of The People as "the Jews"; who will, as a nation, oppose The Twelve with the utmost bitterness.

The Christian Church of the latter half of the first century had to try to persuade the world to believe in the God of the Jews, in the teeth of the fact that "the Jews" were thwarting them by every means in their power.

We do not forget, meanwhile, that the revelation of "The Father" by Our Lord was quite different from the old Israelitish conception of JHVH.[2]

CHECK TO EARLY ATTEMPTS

Most naturally, the Apostles are working to establish "*the Kingdom of Israel.*" Before they can begin to go to the heathen world, The Nation must be led to acknowledge Joshua the Nazoræan. How can this be done if

[1] See S. John 17. 3. [2] See p .20.

men like Stephen work with so little tact, that they rouse the hostility of " The People " ?

To-day those Apostles in glory are watching the progress of the growth of The Kingdom, and the building of " The Temple." [1]

How " *He that sitteth in the heavens* " must smile [2] as He sees His little children, so dear to His Heart, trying to do His Work, and tumbling over one another in their beautiful childlike zeal !

RESURRECTION HALOS

It is rare that the martyr's halo is seen by all those who are present at the martyrdom. God's chief Ministers of State all ' drink of the Cup ' even if they do not all drain the dregs. Throughout the ages God has buried His servants, but carried on their work.

There is *not only* a Resurrection of the Flesh.
Isaiah's " *Suffering Servant* "—" *the remnant* "—
died, generation by generation.
But " he " is risen again in the teaching of the Old Testament.
God's ONLY-BEGOTTEN-SON died on Calvary.
But He is risen again in The Catholic Church.
The Apostles died in various parts of the world.
But they are risen again in the records of the New Testament.
Stephen died " outside the city."
But he rose again in Paul.
GOD buries only His servant's *body*.
And that also He will raise.

Once again we find ourselves far ahead on the Christian Way, and must hark back.

[1] 1 Cor. 3. 16. [2] Ps. 2. 4.

CHAPTER L (A.D. 36)

UNDER THE CLOUD

8. 3 Saul was laying waste The Church,
Entering into every house,
And apprehending both men and women,
Was committing them to prison.

RECULER POUR MIEUX SAUTER

Although Paul tells us that he compelled some to blaspheme; that is, to abjure the Stephenite 'heresy' and curse Stephen's name;[1] it is evident that this scattering was no mere exhibition of cowardice; and those who could not, or would not, leave the city, met this persecution unflinchingly.

Saul's efforts to stamp out the fire of enthusiasm for the Word-of-Universalism, which this Joshua the Nazoræan is supposed by the 'Stephenites' to have brought to The Nation, are resulting in a shower of HOLY-SPIRIT-sparks which will light up fires in all directions.

SAUL DOES NOT APPREHEND THE XII

The Twelve are not preaching this 'pestilent heresy' of Catholicity. They are "*under the cloud*" for a time, because Stephen's heresy has brought discredit on all

[1] Note Luke's words in **11.** 19, "The trouble that arose upon Stephen" (*epi*, not *dia*). Also **26.** 11, "I compelled them to curse."

the High-Jew party, and bitter persecution to most of them. But the respect in which all " the people " have held The Twelve so long, is not instantaneously destroyed by the ' misguided zeal ' (?) of one of their presbyters.

So we may picture The Twelve still attending regularly at the daily Evening Prayer in the Temple ; and doing all they can to support the courage which is being shown by their flocks, now reduced in numbers.

Gradually the bitter fanatical feeling " that arose about Stephen " subsides. The Twelve show no sign yet of preaching such ' advanced ' opinions.

Bishops generally have been cautious men, taking up a position somewhat in the rear of the army.

And very rightly so !

The Commander-in-Chief does not fight in the advanced trenches. He has proved his courage there, and now proves his value in command. He has far greater risks to face than the private soldier, but they are of a different kind.

NUMBERS

Numbers are not everything. The historical-instinct of Luke needs no reminder of that. But we shall look once again at that 3,000, and 5,000.

A High-Jew-party that swelled from 120 to about 3,000 as the result of the events of a single day ; whose men-adherents are about 5,000 as the result of some months of visible labour by The Twelve, and of the same period of invisible Work of THE HOLY SPIRIT ; is no small force in Jerusalem.

The ostentatious abstention from any effort to avenge the Crucifixion of Joshua could not fail to produce its destined Christian [1] effect.

[1] A twentieth-century attribute.

Even a bigoted Low-Jew like Saul cannot be entirely uninfluenced by it. (Another " prick.")

When we allow time for further growth since that far-off day when the Broad-Jews made their first attack ; when we consider that 5,000 men implies families numbering anything from 10,000 to 50,000 ; when we remember that a large number of the leading members of the Broad-Jew-party were now among the High-Jews ; when we recall Luke's statement that just before the Stephen Riot the numbers " were multiplying exceedingly " ; we shall see that a very large proportion of the inhabitants of Jerusalem looked up to The Twelve as their acknowledged Rabbis, with Peter as Rabban.[1]

" A-young-man-named-Saul," zealous Low-Jew as he is, is not such a fool as to try to apprehend the High-Jew peasant-Rabbis any more than he would apprehend the leaders of the Essenes, or of the Broad-Jews.

To approve publicly the execution according to The Law of Moses, of a blasphemer against The Law of Moses, who is one of the elders among the High-Jews, is quite another matter.

Firmly holding the Low-Jew Faith, in which he was brought up from boyhood ; in which he has been confirmed by his studies under the great Rabban Gamaliel ; with every fibre of his ardent, zealous, God-possessed [2] nature aflame with jealousy for the Name of Israel's GOD ; he is absolutely convinced that some members of this High-Jew sect are leading The Nation astray from JHVH.

As Saul sees it, Stephen (not The Twelve) made a most deliberate, most foul, most blasphemous attempt :

(*a*) To dethrone JHVH as The Nation's God, and

(*b*) To enthrone Joshua the Nazoræan on JHVH'S Throne.

[1] Page 36. [2] See Gal. 1. 15.

OUT OF EGYPT HAVE I CALLED MY SON

The Twelve do not preach (*b*) yet. Nor (*a*) ever.

Their Lord, and THE HOLY SPIRIT 'have many things to show unto them, but they cannot bear them now. Their eyes are still holden that they shall not know Him' yet as GOD THE SON.

Stephen's instant execution, by fanatical Jews of all shades of opinion, throws a glaring light to show us what would have happened had The Twelve in those days publicly taught The Truth that JESUS IS GOD.

Had they done so, Christianity would have been wiped from off the earth at its very birth.

If The Twelve had been martyred at this time, who could have given to the Church-of-the-centuries authoritative teaching about Our Lord, and His Word?

The same GOD Who guarded the Infant Jesus, when under two years old, from the attempts of Herod who would have destroyed Him; now guards the infant-Church from destruction.

He veils temporarily the full knowledge of its Catholic character from the eyes of the Fathers of the Catholic Church; does not yet permit them to see the full glory of that DIVINE NATURE which is in this Church-of-human-flesh; and leads them for a time to "take the young child"-Church 'into the Egypt' of the twilight of partial knowledge; and for a while to take refuge under the shelter of the temporary honorific title of Rabbi.

THE RETURN FROM EGYPT

The return from Egypt will come. Then they will realise their '*call to leave* High-Judaism, *and come into the land* of Christianity *which* GOD *will show* them.' They will understand more clearly the meaning of those (at

present well-nigh-forgotten) words, " Be not ye called Rabbi." I have a higher title, Apostle, in store for you.

But for very many years to come, in Apostolic epistles, the full Catholic Truth will be veiled by them from the hostile eyes of Jews and Heathen who might read the written words. Nevertheless, the Truth they hint at, is clear to the eyes of those who have been initiated into " The Mystery," but who must at present be warned not to proclaim it openly to the uninitiated. The initiated fully understand the allusions to The Secret known only to those who have been obligated.

For all that, it leaks out sometimes ; and ere long caricatures will be chalked up in the streets ; and such expressions as ' Alexamenos worships his god ' will be written underneath.

THE STEPHENITES

Stephen though dead yet speaketh.

It is evident that though Saul may stamp his foot never so vigorously, he cannot stamp an army out of existence.

Whether the present numbers of the High-Jew men-adherents be 5,000, or a little less by persecution, or more by steady growth, we must remember that most, if not all, of them have families. Now a sudden Exodus of a population equal to that of Dorchester, or possibly of Bournemouth, is beyond the bounds of credibility.

Many High-Jews who fled on St. Stephen's Day, to take temporary refuge with friends in the country, must now have come back to their homes, to resume their regular work, and provide for their families.

But the convinced ' Stephenites ' dare not return ; or if they do, they are apprehended and imprisoned, and stoned to death if they persist in their ' heresy.'

SPIRIT-TORCHES

Many are the torches lighted at a martyr's pyre; and the zeal of those who carry them abroad is ever great.

No wonder that those who were scattered, and who gave up home and all for their 'heresy,' proclaim the "good news" which they have received into their hearts, wherever they go.

This period Luke thus sums up for us:

> 4 They therefore that were scattered abroad
> Were going about preaching The Word.

Saul's vigorous stamping on the fire kindled by THE HOLY SPIRIT, has only effected its spread. This is at present through Judæa and Samaria. But we must not see in imagination a multitude pouring forth from Jerusalem.

The new sect of the Stephenites is small in number indeed, but each one feels himself filled with HOLY SPIRIT; and as they travel about, they proclaim their belief. Probably they never thought of themselves as Stephenites, and certainly no such name has been handed down.

Prominent now, there was this "Young-man-named-Saul." He is vigorously engaged in trying to quench those widely-scattered torches. He can, by his emissaries, make a house to house search for heretics in Jerusalem, and a village to village search in Judæa. But Samaria is 'abroad,' as the A.V. and R.V. have hinted. There the High-Priests, under whose authority Saul is acting, have no jurisdiction. And let us remember always, that orthodox High-Jews are now a recognised Jewish denomination, and are no longer 'heretics.' Indeed the very existence of the 'Stephenite heresy' will afford them some shelter.

Before long Saul will himself carry such a torch flaming with HOLY SPIRIT as shall illuminate the world and the centuries.

CHAPTER M (A.D. 37)

SAMARIA

A DIFFICULTY

BEFORE considering the Acts of Philip, we must face a difficult question which has occurred to many.

Why are these two stories inserted here ? [1]

Let us for the present omit them from the history.

They *may* have been misplaced by those who copied Luke's Book ; though it is not easy to see where we can fit them in.

Similar suggestions are made for many passages in the Books of the Bible, which are very puzzling to keen students, who know what real ' literature ' ought to be.

We shall repeat Chap. **8.** 1–4, and then continue with Chap. **9.** 1, which leads straight on to Saul's conversion.

8. 1 And Saul was [for some weeks yet], approving
his (Stephen's) execution.
But there arose on that (very) day a great persecution against The Church
Which was (until then, only) in Jerusalem ;
And they were all scattered abroad throughout
the regions of Judæa and Samaria ;
Except the Apostles.
2 And devout men helped in burying Stephen,
And made great lamentation over him.

[1] (1) Acts **8.** 5–24 ; (2) Acts **8.** 26–38.

3 But Saul was laying waste The Church,
Entering into every house,
And, apprehending both men and women,
Was committing them to prison.
4 They therefore that were scattered abroad
Were going about preaching The Word.

* * * * *

9. 1 And Saul,
Yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of The Lord,
2 Went unto the High Priest
And desired of him letters unto Damascus.

And so forth.

SCISSORS AND PASTE

We feel no sense of loss at the point where the asterisks come. The whole passage reads quite connectedly in English. Must we at this point give up our hypothesis that Luke was a great historian? Was he, after all, as has been suggested, a mere 'scissors-and-paste-editor'; who collected stories and strung them together?

Even so, these two stories seem to have been inserted *most awkwardly* between **8.** 4 and **9.** 1. Up to now, and after now, Luke seems to have been steadfastly leading up to Saul's conversion.

NO!

But no! Omitting these stories, or transferring them, will not do! There they are, and we have no authority to move them. We must study them in their place in the Book. We shall bear in mind that they must be put back again where that row of asterisks stands.

So for a time we leave Saul, systematically '*searching Jerusalem with candles*.' No Stephenite's life is safe in

Judæa. Saul's emissaries may turn up in any village, any day, and hold an Inquisition concerning The Faith. The High-Priest has (unfortunately, Saul thinks) no jurisdiction in Samaria.

POINTS OF VIEW

We shall first try to look at these two stories from different points of view.

A. GOD'S point of view.

We may, with all reverence, in a firm belief that GOD is ever viewing all the history of the world and the centuries, see this indicated in

(Verses 6 and 7) Philip's success.

(Verse 17) The Outpouring of THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Whatever our own personal views may be about this, at least we may agree that Luke thought that he was indicating GOD's view.

B. The views of the Christian Centuries.

These are contained in scores of commentaries, and nearly all of them support Luke's opinion about the way GOD looked at the incidents.

C. The Apostles' point of view.

(Verse 14) They sent Peter and John to see what was going on. Stephen, another of their Elders, had involved them in serious trouble.

(Verse 15) This new work seemed to be directed by THE HOLY SPIRIT.

(Verse 17) THE HOLY SPIRIT showed them that HE approved.

(Verses 20–23) They strongly disapproved of one of the converts.

(Verse 25) They continued the evangelisation of Samaria.

(Verse 26) Story of the Ethiopian Eunuch. No evidence of their views.

We might add another point of view.

D. **Saul's point of view.**

But he is not mentioned, between **8.** 4 and **9.** 1.

THE JOYFUL MISSION TO SAMARIA

8. 5 Philip went down,
[Being a prominent Stephenite, his life was not safe in Judæa]
To the city (or, a city) of Samaria,
And was preaching to them about The Messiah.
6 And the crowds were attending to the things which were spoken by Philip, unanimously ;
As they listened, and saw the signs which he was doing.
7 For from many of those who had unclean spirits that cried with a loud voice, they were coming out ;
And many paralysed and lame folk were healed.
8 And there was much joy in that city.

SIMON THE MAGICIAN

9 But a certain man named Simon was previously magicianing in the city,
[*I.e.* performing pretended miracles],
And mazing the Samaritan nation, saying that he was
'A Certain Great One.'
10 And to him they were all attending,
[As well as to Philip],

From small to great, saying
He is that ' Power of God ' which is called ' The Great.'
11 And they were attending to him, because for a long time he had been mazing them with his tricks of magic.
12 But when they believed Philip preaching-the-good-tidings about " The Kingdom of God," and the " Name of Joshua Messiah,"
They were being baptised in considerable numbers, both of men and women.
13 And Simon himself believed also ;
And he was baptised, and attached himself to Philip ;
And beholding signs and great powers happening, he was in amazement.

HE MUST NEEDS GO THROUGH SAMARIA

Probably these Samaritans knew about that one journey made a few years before this time by The Lord through Samaria, when He had so shocked His disciples by chatting with a Samaritan woman.[1]

If so, the people would remember, for it was not so long ago, that the woman came running to them with the startling statement, " Messiah has come."

Now, a kindly old man (who has been forced to flee from those hateful Pharisees of Jerusalem ; and who belongs to the new sect who, as every one in Palestine knows, believes that Joshua the Nazoræan is Messiah), comes to tell them that this is true ; and, moreover, that Samaritans are invited into " The Kingdom of God."

The news that the Jews (really, it is only a-few-of-the-High-Jew-party) are ready to welcome Samaritans into

[1] S. John 4. 4–42.

' God's Own,' or " The Elect," meets with a very ready acceptance. There *would* be " much joy in that city ! "

And when Philip further, worked miracles, quieted shrieking demoniacs, and gave strength to paralysed and lame folk, they were ready to believe every word he said.

PRE-MOSLEMS

We have spoken in the Introduction of the Samaritans as the Non-Conformists of those days.[1]

Now that we begin to mix with Samaritans, it is necessary to point out that by Non-Conformists we do not mean Free-Church-men.

We have called a Pharisee a Low-Jew, because he was devout, and Bible-loving.

We have called a Sadducee a Broad-Jew because his views were broad.

We have called a Samaritan a Non-Conformist because he did not conform.

We have called the believers High-Jews, because they are on their way to become Catholic.

This term Non-Conformist having served its introductory purpose will now be dropped.

The relations between Samaritan and Jew would to-day be better represented as similar to the relationship of Mohammedanism to Christianity.

In future, if we wish to avoid the word Samaritan on account of its association with the parable of The Good Samaritan, we shall call Samaritans ' Pre-Moslems.'

SIMON'S BEWILDERMENT

Now during the period preceding Philip's arrival, they had fallen under the spell of an itinerant charlatan,

[1] See p. 23.

who made a living by his conjuring tricks; and who announced himself, wherever he went, as 'The Great'; pretending that he was one of the 'Powers' sent into the world by God, as taught by 'Gnostics.' One fears that these simple-minded Pre-Moslems were rather credulous folk.

Simon was not of the credulous type. He knew too much for that. And after watching Philip with most minute attention for some time, he was firmly convinced that Philip's cures were genuine, and of an order different from any wonders he could do himself. He was perhaps the most convinced believer in the city, as regards the miracles.

So Philip was baptising numbers of converts, and rejoicing in his success.

A PARTNERSHIP!

Simon, in his own mind, decided to go into partnership with this man.

"The 'Two Great Powers,' Simon and Philip, 'The Great' and 'The . . . ' (No matter! we shall think of a suitable title later)."

"We will pick up a little more money from these simple folk."

"Then for Egypt maybe, and perhaps Rome, where every one's pouch bulges with gold!"

Simon is delighted that he and Philip both happened to light on Samaria about the same time.

THE VISIT OF TWO APOSTLES

14 Now when the Apostles who were (still) at Jerusalem heard that
Samaria has received the Word of God,
They sent unto them Peter and John.

THE LIGHT OF CATHOLICITY IS DAWNING IN A THREATENING SKY

News in the East travels from mouth to mouth with a rapidity which sometimes makes the 'local newspaper' seem slow. Such startling news as this would be all over Jerusalem; and day by day the progress of this 'Baptising of Pre-Moslems' would be brought to the ears of The Twelve by timid High-Jews, who know it will arouse another persecution.

THE HOLY SPIRIT, through Stephen, had given The Twelve a bitter draught of The Master's Cup to drink. But they do not recognise it for what it really was, just yet. They can no more see into the future than we can to-day.

To them the situation looks like this.

Stephen had brought great discredit on High-Judaism.

What is Philip doing?

15 They came down.

They saw the enthusiasm of these new converts, and their great numbers. They saw the success of Philip's 'Mission Preaching.'

'Is this thing of GOD?'

They prayed for them that they might receive
THE HOLY SPIRIT.

16 Because, as yet (the position was [1]
That) HE had fallen upon none of them.

The answer to their question must be sought from GOD. So they pray to HIM. This attitude of prayer may imply 'a Retreat' for a day or two.

(Verse 16) The situation was [1] only this.

They had been baptised into the Name of The Lord Joshua.

[1] ὑπῆρχον.

INTO THE NAME

The pioneer Philip has gone on ahead of the Leaders of the Expeditionary Force.

The Twelve have been baptising Jews for "The Remission of Sins."

Philip has begun baptising Pre-Moslems "Into THE NAME."

The Generals of the Expeditionary Force know what their marching orders are.

Go into all the world, and preach the Good News to the whole creation. Make disciples of all the nations

In Jerusalem,
In all Judæa, and
In Samaria, and
Unto the uttermost bound of the earth ;

Baptising them **into** THE NAME
Of THE FATHER, and of THE SON, and of THE HOLY SPIRIT.

And lo ! I AM with you always, even unto the Consummation of The Age.[1]

Is Philip on "The Way" which The Lord pointed out ?

A Commander-in-Chief needs Wisdom.

Wisdom comes from GOD alone.

Wisdom will be given in answer to believing prayer.[2]

(Verse 15) Peter and John pray.

THE ANSWER TO PRAYER

17 Then they proceeded to "lay hands" on them.
And they were receiving THE HOLY SPIRIT.

GOD answered.

[1] S. Matt. 28. 19, 20 ; S. Mark 16. 15 ; Acts 1. 8.
[2] Jas. 1. 5.

HOLY BAPTISM

Henceforth Holy Christian Baptism is to be both "Into the NAME" for admission to the Holy Catholic Church, and also "For the Remission of Sins."

But many years are to pass before it is publicly announced as "Into the NAME of the HOLY TRINITY."

This Catholic Faith is not to be proclaimed or written for hostile Jews and Heathen to spit at.

Not until S. Matthew in his Gospel makes his great call to his countrymen, appealing to the full-fill-ments of Old Testament prophecy, will this sacred new Revelation be clearly written; as it is at the end of his work.

And many years will pass, before S. John ('tarrying until The Lord comes' in the-Revelation-of-His-Glory-to-the-world,) will venture to write those intimate sayings which were spoken to His Friends, just before His Going Away.

AND WOMEN

Again we note Luke's pointed insertion of the words "and women." Women were often of small account in the Jewish Church. But they have been the *intuitive-spirit* in the Christian Church, which THE HOLY SPIRIT joins to the more masculine *logical-faculty*, 'making both one.'

UNDISCRIMINATE BAPTISINGS

A WARNING

We must not overlook here Luke's cautious words "were receiving."

As these 'Confirmations' are proceeding, Simon the Magician is gazing in amazement.

Here is a wonder far beyond his dreams.

His whole possessions shall be invested in ' Magic ' of this sort ! It will pay him a hundred-fold !

Perhaps he has heard how ' Barnabas, having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at The Apostles' feet.' [1]

He will follow that excellent example !

It will be a splendid investment !

18 But Simon,
Seeing that through the imposition of the hands of the Apostles
The spirit is being given ;
Brought them money, saying,
19 Give me too this ' Power,'
That on whomsoever I ' lay hands '
He may receive holy spirit.

SPIRITS

Simon the Magician ' raised a spirit ' that day which terrified him at its appearance !

The spirit of the Magician and THE HOLY SPIRIT are ' *as far apart as the East is from the West* ' ; and would that every member of the Church had always felt from the heart that ' never the twain shall meet.'

It is indeed only in cases which are condemned by the whole Church, that this awful sin of Simony, in which the name of Simon the Magician is for ever execrated, appears as a warning from time to time. But it is a subtle sin, and is ever trying to worm its way unobserved into many a clerical heart !

GOD preserve us all from it !

THE CURSE OF THE APOSTLE

20 But Peter said to him,
Thy money go to perdition with thee !

[1] See p. 94.

That thou thoughtest that thou couldst acquire for thyself this Gift of GOD (IN US) with money !

GOD THE FATHER is GOD above us.
GOD THE SON is GOD with us. (Cf. S. Matt. **1.** 23.)
GOD THE SPIRIT is GOD in us.

21 Thou hast no part nor Cleros [1] (lot)
In this preaching of The Word.
For thy heart, thou unclean spirit,
Is not straight, but clean *opposite to* GOD.[2]

22 Repent then of this thy baseness.
And beg [not offer to] The Lord ;
If by any chance this (unclean) design of thy heart can be cast out of thee.

23 For into the very *gall of venom and the bond of iniquity* [3] I see thee existing.

Luke's epitome of Peter's SPIRIT-given invective against Simon that day would probably appear euphemistic, if we could have had Peter's very words.

I wish I could have heard Peter, and seen that cowering magician. He had been planning how he could invest his cursed shekels in the purchase of " GOD within him " ; recognising neither the infinite greatness, nor the boundless grace of this DIVINE GIFT.

He had been " deaconing " with Philip in the Ministry of the Word.

Now he has no doubt that the Apostles will let him into the Circle-of-The-Twelve, for money !

He hopes to go and enrich himself by casting out unclean spirits, and causing other spirits to enter, while he himself is wholly possessed with the poisonous spirit of money-grubbing.

[1] Neither " part " as a layman, nor Cleros as a cleric. See pp. 33, 35 ; Acts **1.** 17, 26.
[2] Ps. **78.** 37. [3] Deut. **32.** 32 ; Isa. **58.** 6.

As Peter looks at him, he sees a wretch whose heart is filled with devilish poison, and who has sold himself into the very bond of Satan. But Peter knows his Lord, and his Lord's infinite mercy. And even this despicable magician may perchance find forgiveness from The Master (though Peter can hardly think it), if he humbly begs the Lord to cast out these unclean spirits from his heart. No other could do it.

THE WHIMPERING MAGICIAN

24 And Simon said,
Do ye beg for me to The Lord ;
That nothing may come upon me of what ye have said.

The magician shrivels like a tea-leaf on a roasting-pan. These curses terrify him ; but the offer of forgiveness barely reaches his ears, as his after-history shows us. Whimpering out his abject appeal to be let off, he disappears from Bible History ; leaving behind him an age-long warning to the Catholic Church.

THE PIONEER

Perhaps, in a succeeding private episcopal fatherly admonition, the advisability of using more careful discrimination is gently pressed upon Philip. His halo was pushed back out of sight that day.

Philip is one of the pioneers on the track, through the swamps of prejudice, and forests of opposition, to the City of God.

All such pioneers must slip and fall many times on the hard journey, while they clear a track for others who will follow ; and oftentimes steps must be retraced, and a new course chosen, before the needful, hard-beaten road can be made.

It looks so easy to later travellers !

They will erect monuments to commemorate the pioneers ; which these, maybe, will see from their resting places on the SUN-bathed hills and vales of The Promised Land, when they look down into the waters of the Lake of their Generation.

THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY THROUGH SAMARIA

25 They therefore, [Peter and John]
After giving testimony widely,
And speaking The Word of The Lord,
Were returning unto Jĕrusalem,
And many villages of the Samaritans were they evangelising.

" The Way " must have taken a course little expected by these High-Jew-Rabbis.

A few years ago they all but rebuked their Master for His ' unseemly ' conduct. And He was only *talking* to that Pariah pre-Moslem woman. Now they have themselves admitted pariahs among ' God's Own.' But THE HOLY SPIRIT spoke, and they obeyed.

That is not all.

One of their Elders has led the way, and the first Christian " Bishops " are not too proud to follow it.

They are walking in Philip's footsteps ; as on their return to Jerusalem they visit (not the few villages on the direct route, but) many villages of pre-Moslems. They preach the Good News of JHVH's invitation, to people at whom, ten years earlier, they would have spit and cursed, had these pariahs but touched their garments.

But we do not hear of the undiscriminate baptising of crowds of sudden-converts, on their journey.

BACK HOME

What did James Boanerges say when he heard of it? It is certain that long explanations would have to be given to the rest of The Twelve. But evidently they acquiesce in the manifest leading of THE HOLY SPIRIT.

CHAPTER N (A.D. 37)

SAUL'S POINT OF VIEW

SAUL HEARS

THE news of what had happened in this pre-Moslem town, not thirty miles away, must have spread like wildfire through Jerusalem.

All Samaria was aflame with the news, and many of these simple-minded folk on the northern border of the two 'counties,' may have been attempting to fraternise with their new-found brothers; who, after centuries of contumely and hatred, at last were recognising them as "God's Own." [1]

The result of such an attempt at fraternity by a Samaritan Pre-Moslem, who met a Low-Jew Rabbi, or a Broad-Jew Priest, on (let us say) the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, may be left to the imagination. They would strip him bare of any conceit he had.

D. **Saul's point of view,**[2]—begins to be of interest.

Saul is not mentioned between **8.** 4 and **9.** 1. But we can hardly regard him as uninterested in this news!

IMAGINATION

Let us once more avail ourselves of imagination, and think what he might have said, as he bore the news of Philip's action to Rabban Gamaliel.

[1] We twentieth-century folk must remember that these Samaritans are not "uncircumcised heathen." They have their copy of "The Torah," and in 1925 their descendants boast that their ancient MS. of The Pentateuch is the most ancient in the world.

[2] Page 175.

Rabban, the hand of GOD is heavy on The Nation. This day one of my servants, whom I had sent into Samaria to bring me certain tidings concerning the truth of those reports which have of late been brought unto our ears, hath returned.

Rabban, "*the half hath not been told!*" That Philip, who was one of those who made conspiracy with Stephen (I spit upon his name!), hath been baptising into our Holy Nation the whole race of the Samaritans, accursed by GOD since the days of Ezra. (On whom blessing, may his name be ever blessed!) These men of Israel (may their names be ever blotted out of remembrance!) are seeking "*to mingle the Holy Seed with the peoples of*" those heathen to whom THE LORD by the mouth of "*Ezra the* holy *scribe*" said, "*Ye have nothing to do with us.*"

Rabban, "*since the days of our fathers*," never hath such "*exceeding guilt*" come upon Our Nation. I fear lest "*we, our priests, and our people*," shall be "*delivered into the hands of the King*" of the Romans, "*to the sword, to captivity, to spoiling, and to confusion of face in the days*" which are coming upon us. Verily, this Philip hath taken upon him to baptise into the Kingdom of Israel and of GOD, in the name of that Joshua whom our rulers caused to be crucified, these people who "*worshipped Succoth-benoth, Nergal and Ashima, Nibhaz and Tartak, Adrammelech and Anammelech.*" Within the space of the last forty days they were worshipping a sorcerer whom they, blaspheming, named The Great Power of God; to-day they worship Joshua the Nazoræan. Forty days hence they will be worshipping another new god, if they hear of him.

That Philip (may his name be for ever anathema!), hath joined himself to that sorcerer, 'full of all guile and

all villainy, that child of the devil, that enemy of all righteousness, to pervert the right ways of The Lord.'

They have conspired together to admit into The Nation those concerning whom JHVH hath said, "*Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in to you. Seek not their peace nor their prosperity for ever. Depart, ye that bear the vessels of The Lord, and touch not the unclean thing.*"

Rabban, thou knowest how "*I have contended with these transgressors, I have cursed them, and smitten certain of them, and made them swear by God that they will not mingle themselves with the peoples of the lands.*"

And here before thee, Rabban, with an oath I swear, that I will be unto these accursed "*children of Belial*" a second Nehemiah, if the Lord will "*strengthen His bond-servant by His Holy Hand.*" [1]

A PRAYER

Let us follow this Pharisee as he goes into The Temple, and removing our shoes (for it is Holy Ground, albeit Judaic Wilderness) let us with downcast eyes stand afar off and listen to a prayer; even though only in imagination.

It is *the time of the Offering of the Evening Oblation.*

"*O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to Thee, my God; for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our guiltiness is grown up unto the heavens. Since the days of our fathers we have been exceeding guilty unto this day.*" [2]

We have heard enough.

Communion between this true Pharisee and GOD, in The Temple, is sacred.

[1] 1 Kings **10.** 7; 2 Kings **17.** 24–41; Ezra **9.**; Neh. **6.** 9; **13.** 25; Isa. **52.** 11; Acts **13.** 10.

[2] Ezra **9.** 5–7; S. Luke **18.** 9–14.

Let us withdraw, smiting on our breasts and saying, " God be merciful to me, a sinner."

Let us repent of some of our pharisaic language about Jewish Pharisees. We are not God, to say " Woe unto you ! "

And most of all, let us avoid further careless talk about " Saul the Persecutor." Adopt the advice of that wise old Rabban Gamaliel, " Let Saul alone." Paul bears on every inch of skin on his whole body " the marks of The Lord Jesus." [1]

In his letters he has cursed himself sufficiently, to dispense with any need of further execration from us.

" GOD, Who called him from his mother's womb," [2] and Who brought him into the Egypt of Pharisaic Judaism for the first forty [3] years of his life, is preparing to show him such a sight of JESUS in GLORY, as has previously been shown only to that elderly, hook-nosed Jew, with the beard.

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

Saul at present knows in part. He has begun to be a partaker of that Life Eternal, which is to know THE FATHER ; and JHVH will fan this fervent zeal, " *and send a fire into his bones* " which will " *consume him* " as a living sacrifice acceptable to God, on that day when " *the fire of* THE LORD *shall fall*," and Saul will begin to know JESUS CHRIST WHOM GOD HATH SENT. From that day forward, throughout the remainder of his life, he will press on toward the goal of the prize of his high calling. Even that he may know HIM, and the power of His Resurrection, through fellowship with His Sufferings ; and may apprehend THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE SON, Who has

[1] Gal. 6. 17 [2] Gal. 1. 15.
[3] The round number is used as Old Testament uses it.

apprehended him for this one thing. An unseen path lies before Saul, through labours, prisons, stripes, deaths, lictor's beatings, shipwrecks, exposure on the deep sea, journeyings ; perils from rivers, robbers, Jews, Heathen ; watchings, hunger, thirst, fastings, cold, tattered clothing ; Early-Christian ignorance, desertion, calumniation, misunderstanding. The forest is dense and dark, the tangled-undergrowth must be hacked away foot by foot.

But the Light, which on S. Paul's Day suddenly flashed from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, and which for three days blinded him by its Glory, never failed to enlighten the track through the tangled forest, over the freezing glaciers, down into the miasmic swamps, until the day when Paul being conformed unto HIS death, attained to the Resurrection from the dead, and saw JESUS even as HE is ; and now knows HIM, even as also he had been known.[1]

But as Saul departs from the Temple, the all-important thought in his mind that day is,

HOW MAY THESE ACCURSED STEPHENITES BE EXTIRPATED ?

" Stephen has been silenced for ever !

But there is no knowing how much harm may be done to The Nation by this anathematised Philip ! "

Surely never before have Israelites so endeavoured to dethrone The Nation from JHVH's favour as these Seven High-Jew Elders are doing ! For probably the other five are spreading this poisonous anti-JHVH teaching somewhere, as Philip is doing.

(The goad keeps pricking, pricking, pricking.)

Could that Nazoræan be " *That Prophet ?* "

[1] 1 Kings 18. 38 ; Lam. 1. 13 ; S. John 17. 3 ; Acts 9. 3 ; 22. 6–11 ; 26. 12–18 ; Rom. 12. 1 ; 1 Cor. 13. 12 ; 2 Cor. 11. 23–27 ; Phil. 3. 10–14.

" Avaunt thee, Shaitan ! "

" I kick away the very thought ! "

But THE HOLY SPIRIT ceases not to goad His Jewish ox, along the furrow which is heading towards that place near Damascus.

PLANS

Now Saul may have been bowed as to his legs, but he was straight as to his heart.[1]

Even though he may have been little as regards inches, he was great as an organiser.[1]

He always inspired devotion in many with whom he came in contact ; and there can be little doubt that this young Pharisee Noble, who also holds the high rank of Roman-Citizen-by-birth, can call on many adherents to do his bidding. We shall hear of some of these soon accompanying him to Damascus.

Philip cannot be touched, so long as he remains in the shelter of Samaria.

But orders can be given to trustworthy Low-Jew men, that they shall be closely on the watch for any tidings of Philip's crossing the border into Judæa.

Then if he can be caught, he will have short shrift from the Sanhedrin !

So far, the High-Jew " Rabbis " (as they think themselves), are maintaining a position of orthodoxy from which they cannot easily be dislodged ; but we shall see !

THE PREACHING IN SAMARIA

Ere long, news comes that The Twelve too are becoming tainted with this pestilent ' Catholicity ' heresy.

What does wise Rabban Gamaliel say ?

" Let them alone ! "

[1] See p. 5.

" If they put their own necks into the noose, we may leave ' the people ' to deal with them as they deserve."

" If they choose to go and set up a new ' Church ' in Samaria, with a new god, and install themselves as Samaritan priests at Gerizzim, it will be in perfect keeping with all Samaritan history, and they may be left to execute their own painless extinction."

Rabban Gamaliel was a wise man ; but not at that date filled with the Wisdom of THE HOLY SPIRIT.

* * * * *

Through the whole of this chapter hitherto, the editor asks only for ' possibility.'

He will now take up his palette once again with its four colours (p. 3), and endeavour to paint a twentieth-century

PORTRAIT OF PHILIP

An oldish Jew, who having made a modest fortune abroad, has retired from business, and has come back to live in comfort in the land of his fathers.

He is not so manifestly filled with HOLY SPIRIT as was Stephen. For all that, he is very full of faith, well-read in the Holy Scriptures, full of energy despite his years, thoroughly kind-hearted, impetuous, and very zealous for The Messiah.

Possibly his judgment and discretion are apt to be clouded at times by his kind-heartedness and his impetuosity.

He has four daughters,[1] maiden ladies of uncertain age, who look up to their father with devotion and admiration, and are as zealous in spreading The Faith as he is.

As to personal appearance, we may imagine a typical well-bred Jew.

[1] Acts 21. 9.

CHAPTER O (A.D. 37)

THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH

8. 26 A LORD'S messenger (or, angel) spoke to Philip, saying,

Rise up, and travel towards the South,

As far as the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.

The coming of this messenger, or angel (the Greek word may be translated either way), may have been during the missionary journey of Peter and John, or later.

We might suggest an emissary from Saul, with a deceitful message similar to that of the "*old prophet in Bethel*" (1 Kings **13.** 11–31), but for two facts :

(*a*) Saul was a gentleman, as well as a man of wealth and of high lineage.

(*b*) Luke speaks of the SPIRIT in verse 29.

Whenever, or however, the message came, it was a summons to go into danger.

Philip was, till lately, a prominent citizen of Jerusalem, and could not travel far across Judæa, without the risk of being recognised by someone.

Saul's Low-Jew friends were on the look out for him, with very special keenness.

However, the risk would be minimised, from the fact that as regards that particular road, Luke tells us

26 The same is desert.

There were no villages in which he would, almost certainly, be recognised and apprehended. But why he should go to a stretch of uninhabited road, was not at all apparent.

However, being somewhat despondent about the check given to his zeal in the matter of Simon the Magician, the call to " rouse up " his flagging spirits was welcomed ; even though it offered no prospect of another great ' mass movement.'

27 And he roused up, and journeyed.

A man endued with a more cautious temperament than Philip's, would have hesitated. But whatever we may say about Philip's judgment, courage was not lacking in his composition.

The combination of high courage and great caution in a man, is rare. Philip is a contrast to Gamaliel.

And ' Early-Christians ' were not all ' admirable Crichtons.' [1]

> And behold, an Ethiopian man, an eunuch,
> A Noble of Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians,
> Who was [her Treasurer], over all her treasure,
> Who had come to Jerusalem to do homage (or, to worship),

28 Was now on his return journey.

We shall pass over, for lack of space, many interesting details which will be found in all the Commentaries ; contenting ourselves with remarking that the visit *may* have been undertaken as a courtesy, or to pay tribute, to the Representative of Rome, who acted in Judæa for the Roman Empire.

A visit of congratulation to Marcellus on his succeeding Pontius Pilate as Procurator might be suggested.

[1] See p. 18

28 And seated in his chariot, he was reading
(The Book of) *The Prophet Isaiah.*
29 And the SPIRIT said to Philip,
Approach, and attach thyself to this chariot.

This wealthy Noble had bought in Jerusalem, a Section of " The Book of The Prophet Isaiah," and was taking it home as a curiosity. The Ethiopic language, though its letter-characters are peculiar to itself, is closely akin to Hebrew and Aramaic.

Philip feels an impulse within him, which, he feels assured, tells him the object of his unexpected journey.

30 And Philip ran to him, and heard him reading
[Aloud, as he was laboriously spelling out the letters]
I-s-a-i-a-h-t-h-e-P-r-o-p-h-e-t,
31 And he said, Dost thou know what thou art reading ?
And (the Eunuch) said,
How could I, except someone (or, when I have no one to)
Act as my guide ?
And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.
32 Now the Section of The Scripture which he was reading was this one,
As a sheep to slaughter was He led :
And as a lamb before His shearer is dumb :
So He openeth not His mouth.
33 *In the humiliation His judgment was taken away :*
His race (descent) who shall narrate in full ?
Because His life is taken from the earth.

The Section of the Book of Isaiah which the Eunuch had bought may have been Isaiah **40.–66.** From it

Philip read the above passage (Is. **53.** 7, 8) to the eunuch.

34 And the Eunuch, answering to Philip, said
I pray thee, about whom doth the Prophet say this ?
About himself, or about some other person ?
35 And Philip, opening his mouth,[1]
And beginning from this Scripture (as a text),
Preached to him the Good News about JESUS.

Philip was only too delighted, in his boundless enthusiasm, to pour out the good news of the Message-to-all-mankind, with which his heart was filled, of The-Universal-Gospel-in-and-through-JESUS.

This is that same Universal Gospel with which " Acts " is filled.

36 And as they were going along the road, they came to some water ; and the Eunuch said,
Behold ! water !
What hinders me from being baptised ?
38 And he (the eunuch) commanded the chariot to stand still ;
And they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch ;
And he baptised him.

Reading these two verses, the proceeding must strike us as somewhat casual. Both Philip and the Treasurer seem to be of an impetuous temperament.

There is almost overwhelming evidence, however, from the Ancient Manuscripts, that we have the passage here as Luke wrote it.

But at a very early date, some Christian who was copying a manuscript which he had before him, feeling it to

[1] We shall note this phrase later, in Acts **10.** 34.

be impossible that this could be the full account of the event, inserted between verses 36 and 38, these words :

37 But Philip said,
If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest.
And he answered and said,
I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Even with this addition, the baptism of the new convert into the " Family of God," and his acceptance as one of " God's Elect," must strike us as a very hurried proceeding ; especially as Luke continues

39 And when they came up out of the water
A lord's spirit rushed Philip away.
And the Eunuch saw him no more ;
For he was continuing his journey rejoicing.

The reader will notice that here we have written spirit, not THE SPIRIT. In ancient Greek writing all the letters are Capital Letters [1] ; there are no small ones. Therefore we have no indication, from the lettering, how Luke intended this word to be read here. But he omits the definite article (the), and does not insert the adjective Holy, one or both of which words he inserts everywhere else in these Chapters **1.** to **12.** ; except where it is manifest that he is speaking of the human spirit. This omission looks as though it were deliberate on Luke's part, in the telling of this story.

We shall only *suggest* the possibility of a traveller being seen approaching along the road ; and the fact that Philip was in great danger of arrest.

SUDDEN " CONVERSIONS "

At the date (about A.D. 60) at which Luke wrote " The Acts," both this baptism and the baptism of Simon the

[1] They are now called Uncial letters.

Magician would be recognised as very unwise and precipitate proceedings.

But the stories are so told that they would not convey to any *casual heathen reader* of the book, this Christian view. And so Luke skilfully avoids the danger of giving to the enemies of the Church an occasion to blaspheme, and to make cheap gibes among themselves about the "Early Christians."

What we of the twentieth century, who have been nursed from infancy in the Cradle of the Catholic Church, must see, is a man acting up to his convictions. Philip has had no teaching about this Universal Gospel from The Twelve, and, as we said before, is 'the Pioneer' advancing by himself and alone.

And yet, the leading of THE HOLY SPIRIT is here. HE *Who brings the blind by a way that they know not, will make darkness light before them, and crooked places straight.*[1]

We who have been brought up in the Catholic Faith, made light and straight for us partly through the countless *errings* of men possessed by THE HOLY SPIRIT, through nineteen centuries, can only admire the dauntless courage of this 'pioneer,' and doubt whether we should not have made far greater mistakes than he may have done.

THE EFFECT ON THE TWELVE

It is very unlikely that The Twelve, when they heard about Philip's new escapade, fitted him with the halo with which many of their successors have invested him. We have, however, very naturally, no account of what they thought, and said, and felt. To write such an account in those days would have only brought needless discredit upon The Church.

But we shall once more have recourse to imagination.

[1] Isa. 42. 16.

THE ZEALOUS CHURCHWARDEN

Mr. Philips, a Churchwarden of St. Agatha's, Utopchester, went for a fortnight's holiday to Marocco. On the last day of his sojourn there, as he was on his way to the train after a last walk in the desert, he chanced to see a Moor sitting by the side of the road with a book in his hand. Moved by curiosity, he passed close behind him, and to his amazement, saw that the book was an English Gospel, whose letters the Muslim was laboriously spelling out.

Suddenly fired with missionary zeal, he sat down beside him, and asked him if he could read the book. In broken English, the Moor told him that he barely knew the English letters, and asked Mr. Philips to read him a passage out of the book. Turning hastily over the pages, he read to him the account of the Last Supper.

" You are a Christian ? " said the Moor.

" Oh ! yes, I belong to that body in the Church who are called Anglo-Catholics."

" Can I be an Anglo-Catholic ? "

" Certainly. I happen to have some biscuits in my pocket, and some wine in my flask ; let us eat and drink together."

So the two partake of them.

The Moor has become a brother of Mr. Philips' by eating with him, and goes on his way rejoicing ; and Mr. Philips hurries to catch the train which will take him to the boat.

Returning home to Utopchester he is full of the story about his Muhammedan convert, and his providential visit to Marocco.

The Vicar of St. Agatha's asks him in horror :

" What did you do ? "

"Well, you see, I had to catch the last train for the boat, so I could not do any more."

"Was the man baptised?"

"Oh! no, but I expect he will be. You see there is a Mission Station in the country."

We need not continue the interview.

* * * * *

Now, the above story sounds so outrageous, that it will bring home to our minds the feelings of The Twelve when they first heard that story about Philip; and also Luke's pained feelings at having to tell it.

Our story is impossible, because any Churchwarden knows better than to act in such a way.

But, remember, Philip *could not* know.

And as regards The Twelve, the only possible view for them was this: Here was an uncircumcised heathen, without the slightest preparation, admitted as a full member of "The Household of God," with no possibility of his circumcision, or for his further training in the knowledge of JHVH.

And yet!

It is possible that a seed may have been dropped which was to fructify. Early in the fourth century, two youths named Ædesius and Frumentius founded a Church in Abyssinia (or Ethiopia). That Abyssinian Church has lasted to this day, and they, alone of all the churches of the world, preserved that Book of the Apocrypha, quoted by S. Jude, "The Book of Enoch" (Jude 14, 15). Lost to the Church for many centuries, it was discovered in Abyssinia by the traveller Bruce, near the end of the eighteenth century.

"*Truly, God doeth great things past our finding out; yea, marvellous things without number.*"[1]

[1] Job 5. 9.

But, far transcending any advantage to Abyssinia, here is the last stab of the goad which will drive Saul along his journey to that place near Damascus, where he will see the VISION OF JESUS.

THE FINAL STAB

We need not waste many words on describing Saul's feelings. They would be beyond description, even to himself.

An uncircumcised heathen casually admitted by a Jew into the Jewish Church !

An eunuch introduced, in direct defiance of " The Law " !

The man was not even circumcised, and yet received the Jewish Baptism of a proselyte !

He was sent off to a heathen land, to tell all his heathen brethren that a few drops of water would admit them to the position of " God's Elect " !

Had Philip been admitting Samaritans and heathen into a *Christian Church*, neither Saul, nor any other Jew, would have cared who was admitted, nor how it was done ; any more than he would in 1925.

But what Saul sees is that if this kind of evangelising, initiated by Philip, is allowed to go on, the resultant position will be this :

The Jews **may be** God's Chosen People if they join with Samaritans and heathen.

But their unique position will be gone !

And it is Jews who are bent on destroying this position.

It cannot be God's Will !

Alas ! This is sometimes the message of Christian missionaries-to-the-Jews in the twentieth century.

To Jews ! who have held on to their sacred, God-

given position, through centuries of scorn, ill-treatment, persecution—by " Christians."

Later on, **Paul** saw that ' God had not cast off His Chosen People. One day, their eyes will be opened, they will be reconciled to their Messiah, and so all Israel shall be saved.' [1]

Ye Gentile Christians, " Be not high-minded, but fear ! "

PURSUIT

Saul's soldiery are sent off in all directions, to try to catch this vile renegade Jew, who is carrying Stephen's ' poisonous doctrines ' into effect.

They hear of him at Ashdod (Azotus), and then at other villages, where (most courageously) he is preaching his new-found (though imperfect) Faith ; and then, escaping their pursuit, he finds a refuge in extra-Judæan territory, at Cæsarea, which was independent of Judæa and Samaria.

40 But Philip was found (tracked) to Azotus,
And slipping through (the pursuit),
He went on evangelising [in his hasty fashion
all the towns,
Until he came to Cæsarea.

FRAGMENT OF AN EARLY PRIVATE CONVERSATION FROM THE OUDEN MS.

I only wish you could hear how every one is talking about it in Jerusalem ! I never can go out into the street without some one throwing it in my teeth.

" How sad about poor Philip ! "

" Has Saul caught your Elder yet ? "

" Is the man mad ? "

[1] Rom. 11. 1–33.

" Why can't you keep those Elders of yours in order ? You're their Rabban, aren't you ? "

The very street-urchins yell " Ethiopian Eunuch " at me.

" Oh ! Peter ! And I felt so certain that it was a message from God ! You see, The Lord told us the Good News was to be preached to every creature."

So there we leave Philip at Cæsarea, cured of his rough-and-ready-methods of evangelising the world, after severe admonition from The Twelve ; but never cured of evangelising. Settling down with his family, he continues his steadier, if less meteoric, labour for God and The Lord.

PAUL AND LUKE AT PHILIP'S HOME

Years after, Luke visited him with Paul (Acts **21.** 8). And from both of them he learned how the work of evangelising heathen, which *he* had begun, was being carried on with such results as only THE HOLY SPIRIT could achieve, through the marvellous skill, assiduity, patience, and divinely-given wisdom of the man who had chased him, thirsting for his blood, and who had cursed at his escape !

CHAPTER P (A.D. 60–1925)

NEW TESTAMENT WRITINGS

We may use the colour ' probability ' for our next statement. To Luke, Paul, and Theophilus in A.D. 60, some such view as we have adumbrated in the preceding chapters would be of the *façon* which goes *sans-dire*.

They were alive at the time, and in the midst of a bitter " Judaising " [1] opposition.

In writing this account to Theophilus of Saul's conversion, Luke must closely scrutinise his every word. There may, or rather must, have been a first rough copy. Such a copy, however, he would almost certainly destroy, for fear that it should fall into the hands of enemies, who might read words which he had carefully crossed through or altered.

By this time Christianity was fast becoming a Secret Society, or a Mystery. Such societies must have their signs, their secret tokens shared by the initiated, and they use ordinary ' household-words ' with a significance only known to the brethren of the cult.

Five or ten years later, Luke would not have dared to write the account at all ; and it would have been certain death to Tychicus to be caught with it in his possession.

To Theophilus, who was an initiate, a word carefully chosen would convey a meaning, which would escape the hostile minds of outsiders.

[1] See p. 35.

NERO AND DOMITIAN

But something worse than " opposition " was coming on the young Christian Church, and that just after Luke wrote his Second Volume. In A.D. 64, the Emperor Nero, to escape the vengeance of the Roman populace for his deliberate incendiarism of the whole of the Roman " slums," in preparation for his new " housing-scheme," declared that the destruction of these homes of the poor was the work of " The Christians."

A terrible persecution began, and " hunting-Christian-wild-beasts " became a favourite " sport " throughout the Roman Empire. The " sport " was revived later under another Emperor, Domitian, in A.D. 90. These Christian-wild-beasts were captured in hundreds or thousands, and the Roman populace crowded the Colosseum at Rome, (visited in 1923 by King George V, and Queen Mary, of England,) to feast their eyes on the spectacles of Christian-wild-beasts *v.* Natural-wild-beasts.

CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

We need not wonder at the absence of Christian literature during the period A.D. 60–100 ; or the non-publication of Luke's Third Volume.

Instructions were given to the Imperial Governors and officials throughout the Empire, to extirpate the " sect," and destroy every vestige of their writings.

To bear the " name " of Christian was made, by statute, a *crime* against the State.

Two results followed :

(1) Numbers of copies of Apostolic, and other Christian, writings were for ever lost.[1] It is wonderful that so many survived. Probably

[1] Cp. p. 201.

our present possession of this book, "The Acts of the Apostles," is due to the fact that it was first in the possession of a wealthy Christian Roman Governor who could keep it carefully under lock and key.

(2) Such writings as escaped the destruction became of inestimable value. Copies were secretly made of them during the intervals when persecution was less violent; and the foundation was laid for the recognition of *some* of the surviving fragments of Early-Christian literature, as bearing in a very special degree the marks of inspiration by THE HOLY SPIRIT. It was not, however, until A.D. 397 that the Canon of the New Testament was finally fixed for succeeding centuries by the Catholic Church, at the Synod of Carthage.

SEMI-SACRED

During the period which elapsed between the writing of these books, and their establishment as part of The Bible, of even higher Divine authority than the Jewish books of Old Testament; although they were highly treasured, they were not treated as books so sacred that not a word might be altered.

Consequently, those who copied them added to, or subtracted from, the written text *occasionally*. Some causes for the variations between the copies (which copies came to be very numerous) were:

(*a*) Ignorance of the Greek language.

(*b*) Insertion of details which were known to the copyist; or, which he thought he knew.

(*c*) Alteration of the order or grammar of words, which

seemed, to the copyist, to make the sense more clear.

(*d*) Pious remarks made on the margin, and copied by the next copyist.

(*e*) Tattered copies of the work copied.

FEELING

But one of the most fruitful sources of error was this fact following.

These storms of persecution, and the hatred felt by Jews for Christians, and by Christians for Jews, had completely swept out of being all the "**feelings**" which existed in what we have described as the High-Jew-days.

Christians of the second century could hardly realise that the Apostles ever had Jewish feelings, Jewish aspirations, Jewish love for their Nation, Jewish religion, even Jewish birth.

The Apostles had become to the Christians of the second century the Early - Christian - Fathers - of - the Catholic-Church.

These Christian folk saw The Twelve with halos of inextinguishable glory.

Quite right! They were, and are, wearing them in Paradise.

But in their Christian zeal, the second-century folk were bent on fitting gorgeous halos to *every* saint mentioned in those cherished books; and adorning *every* opponent in those earliest days with horns and a tail.

After all, these people of the New Testament were neither supermen, nor ultra-devils. When they lived, they looked like ordinary folk, as we do to-day.

COLOUR

But the Second-Third-and-Fourth-Century-Christians in their treatment of the New Testament Scriptures,

quite unconsciously gave a " colour " to the records of these earliest days. Or, rather, we should say that, not being all possessed of high artistic literary taste, they represented every person and event, either in spotless white, or spotless black. They had little use for half-tones.

And following in their ' school,' King James' translators of the A.V.—earnest, devoted, scholarly, Christian men—could not possibly avoid unconsciously ' colouring ' their careful, painstaking translation of the Bible into English.

CRITICS

The indefatigable labours of generations of :

(*a*) holy ' Biblical-textual-critics,' collating an enormous mass of Ancient Manuscripts [1] of every conceivable date and script and language, scrutinising every word, *and letter*, with microscopic care ;

(*b*) and of great and fearless ' Biblical-higher-critics,' working over the results of the ' Textual-critics,' and studying these books with all the resources they could bring to bear of literature, art, knowledge of Greek and Latin, history, philosophy, archæology, geographical research, and so forth ;

have now practically restored to us Twent.-Cents. once more the original words of these early books ;

and Luke begins to tell *his* story again.

I fear our editor has wandered far away from " A-young-man-named-Saul " !

[1] Called now, in the twentieth century, Codex A, Codex B, . . . ; Cursive Manuscripts I, II, III, . . . XX, XXI, . . . etc. ; Syriac Version, Old Latin Version, . . . ; Copies numbered 1, 2, 3, . . . 100, 101, . . . ; and so forth.

CHAPTER Q (A.D. 37)

DAMASCUS

ETI

WE must now return to that row of asterisks in Chapter H,[1] and take up the thread of Luke's story.

9. 1 But Saul
Now breathing out threatening and slaughter,
Against The Disciples of The Lord,

We have given an answer to the difficult question which faced us after Acts **8.** 4 ; and the insertion of " The acts of Philip " no longer looks so awkward.

Does Luke give any hint of this method of telling his story ?

It would be quite plain to the-initiated-Theophilus in A.D. 60.

There is a little word "**eti**" (*yet*, *still*, *now*). But hurrying on to the great consummation of the VISION OF JESUS we have overlooked it.

This word is frequently followed by *mallon* (more), but Luke does not use that word here.

Let us look at three slightly different renderings :

eti empneon

(*a*) " Saul yet breathing out. . . . . "

eti empneon

(*b*) " Saul now snorting. . . . "

eti mallon eti mallon empneon

(*c*) " Saul the more," or, " now fairly snorting out threats. . . . "

[1] Page 173.

The word *empneon* may be translated either way that we suggest, " breathing out," or " snorting."

Had a heathen read Luke's words as Luke wrote them, he would probably have regarded them as (*a*) suggests, and passed them over as a mere continuation of **8.** 4.

But Theophilus is living during that time of furious feeling ; and although in the past days at Troas he knew nothing about Saul the Jew, and cared less ; now, being an initiate, he is able at a glance to read the veiled meaning in the harmless-looking words, in the sense that (*b*) suggests. For his eyes **eti** is enough. There is no need to add the (here, rather risky) word **mallon.** For, the use of **eti mallon** would at once reveal the secret to the sharp eyes of a heathen antagonist.

If my reader happens to be a Freemason, he will know how an ordinary-sounding word can convey a meaning to the initiated, which to the popular ear conveys nothing.

Suppose Luke had mentioned that Saul's increased rage was caused by Philip's acts.

What an opportunity for a hostile heathen to point out how these Christians themselves looked upon Philip ; who in A.D. 60 was almost certainly still living at Cæsarea with his daughters, who were some of the leading teachers in the little Church there !

How closely Luke adheres to his resolve to " write unto thee in order, Most Excellent Theophilus " (Luke **1.** 3).

With the exercise of a little imagination we can see Luke sitting by Paul's side in that hired dwelling in Rome, and writing almost at his master's dictation ; certainly asking questions, and making Paul forget what he wrote two lines above [1] in his own letter to Philippi ;

[1] Such breaks in grammatical construction are called ' anacolutha.'

writing as he did in large [1] uncial [2] characters, with slow and painful effort of those almost shapeless hands, whose bones had been broken by many stonings, etc.

And people have called Luke a " patchwork editor " !

Writing to Timothy, S. Paul says :

" Only Luke is with me. Take Mark and bring him " (2 Tim. **4.** 11). If only S. Paul had added (if he could have added), ' And I gave him information for a book he has written to Theophilus.' But why should he ? Luke and Timothy had talked together about Luke's books for hours probably.

CASTING THE DRAG-NET

9. 1 Going to the High-Priest [Caiaphas]
2 Asked from him letters (of commission as far as) to Damascus,
To the synagogues ;
So that if he found any of " The Way," [3]
Whether men or women,
He might drag them bound to Jerusalem.

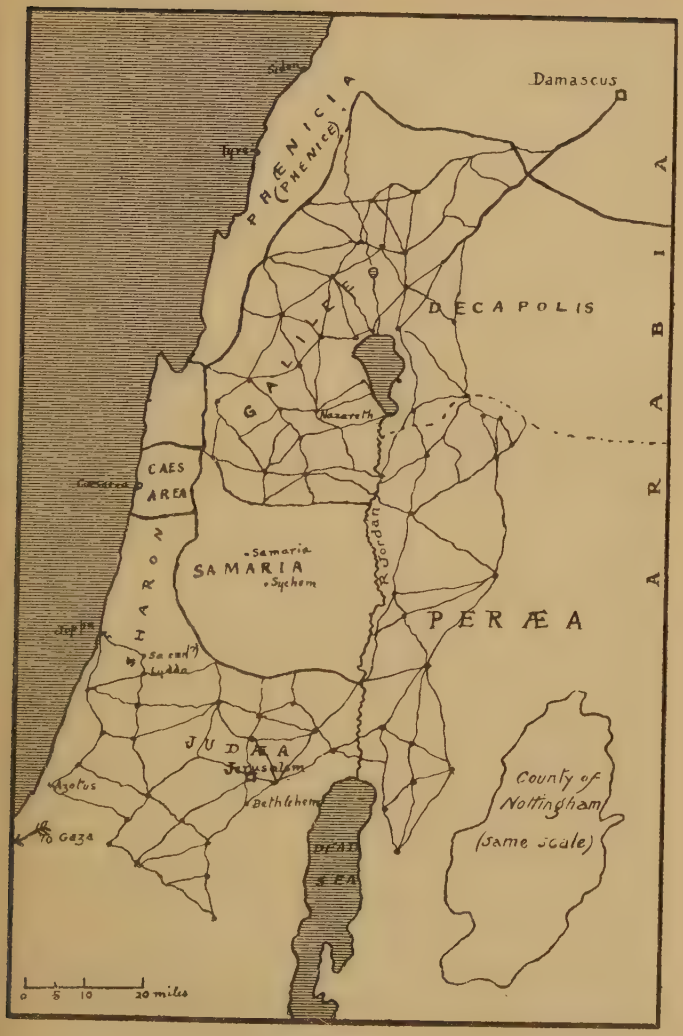
Saul was a Pharisee, and therefore a strict follower of The-Law-of-God-given-to-Moses. He is one of the youngest members of the Sanhedrin, with no special authority vested in him. Therefore he goes to Caiaphas for commission, and to Annas for authority.[4]

Secondly, Saul is a man of conspicuous ability as an organiser.

Thirdly, this supposed attack on the privileged position of the Chosen People has roused him to a perfect frenzy of rage.

His first efforts at stamping out the fire of heresy have resulted in its spread. As stamping will not do, he will try the net.

[1] Gal. **6.** 11, 17. [2] See p. 198. [3] See p. 25. [4] See pp. 82, 83.


Sidon
Tyre
PHÆNICIA (PHENICE)
Damascus
ARABIA
DECAPOLIS
GALILEE
Nazareth
CAES AREA
Caesarea
SAMARITIS
Samaria
SAMARIA
Sychem
R. Jordan
PERÆA
Joppa
Sa and Lydda
JUDÆA
Jerusalem
Bethlehem
Azotus
To Gaza
DEAD SEA
County of Nottingham (same scale)
0 5 10 20 miles

SAUL'S NET.

A net for Galilean fishermen! The method is ideal! They have been catching Jews in their filthy nets, and mixing them with pre-Moslems and heathen! Let us see what Saul's net can catch!

So he asks for letters to every synagogue in the land as far as to Damascus. (Readers of Greek will notice the *eis* and *pros*.)

The fire (of HOLY SPIRIT, if Saul only knew) has spread over Judæa and Samaria, and now farther.

Organise! and quench it.

Take sufficient troopers to warn every synagogue against these incendiaries, who want to burn down the Jewish Faith.

Damascus is the farthest point where they have been heard of at present. Letters of direction and of authority shall be left at every synagogue between that city and Jerusalem.

That is likely to be far enough to cast the net. And every synagogue from Damascus to Jerusalem will be a mesh to catch and hold these struggling fish, until he can bring them, both men and women, to Jerusalem; and hauling in the net, he will catch these low-bred peasant-Rabbis with their own hauls, and extirpate the heresy.

S. Paul tells Timothy that Saul "was a blasphemer" in those days.[1]

Saul little knew that he was to cast a net into the sea of the world's history in which millions of souls of men would be caught, and drawn to land on the shores of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Still less did he see THE GREAT FISHERMAN standing on the shore of this world-lake in which we live and move and have our being.

[1] 1 Tim. 1. 13.

Rushing at the bait of a-great-haul-of-Stephenites-and-High-Jews, Saul found himself caught. For a short time he will lie gasping on the shore ; then, thrown back, he will pursue his fellow-fishes, " that he may capture them, as he was captured by Messiah JESUS." [1]

THE VISION OF JESUS

At this point we propose to combine in one the three accounts given by Luke in his Book [2] (following a method used by the compilers of the Book of Genesis).

For a moment, let us stand at the Damascus-Gate of Jerusalem, and watch this young Israelite Noble, sitting erect on his horse, a veritable Prince of God, his body-servant Titus (?) riding half a length behind ; followed by a glittering cavalcade placed at his disposal by the Heads of The Nation.

9. 3 And as he was journeying,
It came to pass that he drew nigh to Damascus ;
26. 12 With authority (of Annas) [3] } of the high
And commission (from Caiaphas) } priests,
9. 3 And suddenly,
26. 13 At midday, on the road,
22. 6 There flashed round about him a great light out of the sky,
26. 13 Above the brightness of the sun,
Shining round about him and those who were journeying with him ;
26. 14 And when they all fell to the ground,
9. 4 He heard a Voice,
26. 14 Saying unto him in the Hebrew (Aramaic) language,

[1] Phil. **3.** 12.
[2] Acts **9.** 3–25 ; **22.** 6–16 ; **26.** 12–18.
[3] See p. 83.

9. 4 Saul, Saul, why art thou persecuting ME ?
26. 14 It is hard for thee to kick against the goad-pricks.
9. 5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord ?
22. 8 And the Lord said unto him,
I AM [1] Joshua the Nazoræan Whom thou art persecuting.
26. 16 But arise, and stand upon thy feet,
22. 10 And go into Damascus,
And there it shall be told thee of all things which have been appointed for thee to do.
26. 16 For to this end have I appeared unto thee,
To appoint thee a Minister and a Testimony-Bearer
Both of the things wherein thou didst see ME,
And of the things wherein I will appear to thee ;
26. 17 Delivering thee from The Nation,
And from the Gentiles,
Unto whom I Myself now am sending thee ;
26. 18 To open their eyes,
To turn them from darkness unto light,
And from the dominion of Satan, unto GOD,
That they may receive remission of sins,
And Cleros (lot) among the sanctified (holy) ones
By faith which is in ME.

GOD, Who appeared to
Abraham in Mesopotamia,
Moses in Midian,
appeared to
Stephen in The Sanhedrin,
Saul near Damascus.
We are on Holy Ground.

[1] Exod. 3. 14.

THE COMMISSIONED OFFICER

The account is absolutely clear, and unambiguous. No explanation will be attempted here.

(**26.** 16) We will only point out that Saul receives " authority and commission " from The Lord, appointing him to a position of equality with The Twelve, as " a Minister and Testimony-Bearer." [1]

He has seen JESUS, and JESUS promises that he shall see HIM again.

(**26.** 17) He is delivered from the Pharisaic bondage of " tradition " of The Nation.

(**26.** 18) A definite commission is given to him, " to go to the whole world." The nations are not only to be brought into the Dominion of God, but are also to receive the Cleros [2] (or ministry) in The Kingdom of God ; which was formerly reserved to the Tribe of Levi only.

And, as Paul insisted throughout his whole Ministry, " All is by Faith " in JHVH JESUS.

HE CALLED UNTO HIM WHOM HE WOULD

HE, Who called and chose

Simon the rough-tongued fisherman,

Matthew the despised tax-gatherer,

now calls and chooses for the work of converting (not a tiny nation, but) the whole world,

Saul, the Pharisee, and the converted murderer.

Read Acts **22.** 20 ; 1 Tim. **1.** 12, 13.

Saul's '*heart* was always right before God' ; [3] but, for a time, he missed his way.

The cause was largely that Saul's halo got tilted over his eyes. Paul kept it severely out of sight.[4]

[1] Cf. Acts **1.** 8.
[2] See pp. 33, 35 ; Acts **1.** 17, 26 ; **8.** 21.
[3] Acts **8.** 21.
[4] Cf. 2 Cor. **12.** 1–9, etc.

JESUS always was " a friend of publicans and sinners. O the depth of the riches both of the Wisdom and the Knowledge of God ! How unsearchable are His Judgments, and His Ways past tracing out ! For who hath known the Mind of The Lord ? or who hath been His Counseller ? " [1]

SAUL'S SQUADRON OF HORSE

9. 7 And the men who were journeying with him had halted,
Bedumbed, hearing the sound (or, voice)
But beholding no one. [Luke's account.]
22. 9 They who were with me, were gazing at the light,
(Here the Bezan Codex adds " and were afraid " ;)
But the Voice of Him Who was speaking to me they did not hear. [Paul's account.]
26. 14 We all fell to the earth. [Paul's account.]

DISCREPANCIES (1)

How much printer's ink has been used in the efforts to reconcile these three scraps of the three accounts ?

Commentaries will give a clue to the answer.

Now, even " Acts " did not wear a halo when Luke wrote it in that hired dwelling in a back-street in Rome ; so soon to be burned by Nero's secret order, so that he might fiddle while Rome burned.

LOOKING AHEAD

Luke little thought that nineteen centuries afterwards his letter would be contained in a large Volume bound in Black Calf, which would be the English Version of The Holy Bible, appointed by the special command of

[1] Rom. 11. 33.

The Most High and Mighty Prince James to be read in Churches.

Luke never had a vision of that Volume set in the front parlour in the place of honour, with an antimaccassar over it, and used as a stand for a vase of flowers.

Luke never got even a glimpse of the owner of that Volume, who almost thought that his English Bible had come down direct from Heaven, with the publisher's name ready printed on the title-page.

Luke did not write for that owner, who regarded the Volume as so sacred, that it had to be carefully dusted every day, and rarely opened except to record a birth, or a marriage, or a death.

Luke had no vision of the millions of poor Christian souls, who after sixteen centuries would ponder over the words which he and other Saints wrote, now printed in a broken-backed, torn, dogs-eared, treasured, thumb-marked One-Volume-library, called " My Bible," because they had been brought by THE-HOLY-SPIRIT-in-those-words, " out of darkness into light, and from the dominion of Satan unto GOD and the remission of sins, by faith in JESUS."

Luke had no pre-vision of those who in years to come would use his letter for purposes of acrimonious discussion, rather than for living faith in GOD.

No. Luke only thought of writing a living record of living men for a living friend ; and never suspected that his words would be ever-living.

DISCREPANCIES (2)

We are conjoining three versions of the story into one ; Luke's personal version, and two others which Luke says were spoken by Paul. And the three versions are not word for word alike. Did Theophilus, when he received

Luke's letter by the hand of Tychicus, look at once for 'discrepancies'?

DULCE, ET DECORE FIT, DESIPIAT IN LOCO

Let us wander for just a few moments in the City of Imagination.

Tychicus has just left the letter at His Excellency's house. The letter is from the friend of Theophilus' boyhood. He puts it under lock and key.

It certainly will not be passed round among the guests who are even now assembling for a banquet.

"Who was your friend, Theophilus, whom I saw leaving your door as my charioteer drove me up? Methought his cloak was somewhat in need of renewal."

"O just a messenger, who brought me a letter from an old friend in Rome."

* * * * *

The banquet is over.

The conversation at dinner did not focus round the story of a broken-down old Jew, with a body covered with the scars of ill-usage, with a face seamed by past and present anxieties; with eyes which glow with the fire of THE HOLY SPIRIT; chained by the wrist to a trooper of a Legion lately come home from the savage land of Britain; in a little scantily-furnished room about eight feet square, which he shares with Luke, and for which a Jew landlord charges him an exorbitant rent.

Isn't it funny to think that on "S. Paul's Eve," twenty-five years before, Saul would not have deigned to sit at table with that "nigger" Theophilus.

* * * * *

Theophilus retires to rest.

Let us imagine him, burning gallons of midnight-oil in an effort to reconcile those three accounts, which tell

what happened to Saul's troop-of-horse. He solemnly wonders whether these discrepancies do not throw grave doubt on the authenticity of the whole of Luke's letter !

Or, brilliant inspiration !

Tychicus has tampered with the Text !

There is a riot brewing in the City of Imagination. Let us flee to another city.

TO DAMASCUS

9. 8 And Saul arose from the ground,
And his eyes having been opened [they had been closed],
He was seeing nothing
22. 11 On account of the GLORY of that LIGHT.
9. 8 ⎫ So, leading him by the hand,
22. 11 ⎭ His men led him into Damascus.
9. 9 And he was sightless for three days,
And was neither eating nor drinking.

For three days he lay with closed eyes as one dead. His spirit was rapt away, to all appearance. Whether it were so or not, neither he nor any one in the house knew. For many years, he would not write of what had happened now, or of other direct heavenly visions, lest it should appear, as it undoubtedly would have done, mere empty boasting ; neither will he allow Luke to use the words ' seemed dead ' here. At length, forced by the persistent calumnies and opposition of the Judaisers,[1] in most carefully veiled and guarded language, he hints at visions in the Third Heaven and in Paradise. Later on (it may be that Luke was writing this account of the VISION OF JESUS while Paul was writing his Epistle to Luke's beloved Philippi), Paul lets himself give one more hint.

[1] See p. 35.

A BALANCE SHEET

Liabilities.	*Assets.*
Forty golden years.	Born a Jew, Circumcised the Eighth day, Of the stock of Israel, Of the Tribe of Benjamin, A Hebrew of Hebrews, As regards "The Law," a Pharisee, Proving my zeal for Judaism by persecuting The Church, Accounted by my contemporaries blameless in the rightful observance of "The Law."

All this stock of 'paper-assets,' collected and stored together, during his life hitherto, on that day in Damascus he burned on the Altar of JESUS, as 'worthless scrip' which he had paid for with forty golden years.

It is not merely that he no longer has the 'scrip'; there is the 'loss' on what might have been bought with some of those golden years, for The-Messiah-Account. (It was not all loss, though !)

Other things, such as :

Roman-citizenship-by-birth,
Wealth,
Social rank,
A household of slaves,
A (perhaps) Tarsian-University training, etc.

were never of sufficient importance to be entered in his account-with-GOD; and he reckons these now as "mere lumber," fit only for the bonfire.

From henceforth the only 'asset' in Paul's 'accounts' is CHRIST.

Paul strikes no 'balance' of gain or loss. All which was formerly on the 'Assets' side he finds is really 'Debit;' and it is wiped off as a 'Bad Debt.'[1]

[1] This is not twentieth-century Book-keeping !

A line is ruled across the page of his life, and the only entries now entered on the 'Assets' side are such as make for 'knowing Christ.' Everything in the world now only 'counts as a debit, through the overwhelming preponderance' on the credit side, 'of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.' 'Of the knowledge of Him, and of the power' given on that third day when He raised (anastasis) Saul from an apparent death, and gave to him both 'power,' and 'fellowship in Christ's Sufferings'; even to him who is one 'who is being made to share-the-very-image [1] of His Death.'

And always before him is the hope, that after 'the exceeding greatness of that revelation,' he may not, through the constant temptations of 'the sufferings which he shares with JESUS,' miss 'the prize of the High Calling' of Apostle, but may finally 'attain by any means to the resurrection (exanastasin) which is from' 'physical death' (2 Cor. **12.** 1–10; Phil. **3.** 5–14).

THE VISION OF ANANIAS

9. 10 Now there was a certain disciple in Damascus,
[He was not the only one],
Named Ananias;
22. 12 A devout man according to "The Law,"
[That is, a Pharisee]
Well reported of by all the Jews that dwelt there.

Note how Luke speaks of "the Jews" in Damascus, which was a heathen city; but never (up to now) of "the Jews" in Jerusalem.[2]

9. 10 And The Lord said to him in a Vision, Ananias.
And he said, Behold, I (am here) Lord.

[1] *συμμορφιζόμενος*, not *συμμορφούμενος*. [2] Cf. p 27.

9. 11 And The Lord (said) unto him,
Arise, and go to the street which is called Straight Street [it is still called so],
And seek in the house of Judas for one Saul by name, a Tarsian ;
For behold, he is praying,
9. 12 And he saw a man, Ananias by name, coming in and laying hands on him, that he may see again.
9. 13 But Ananias answered,
Lord, I heard from many about this man,
How many evils he wrought on Thy saints in Jerusalem ;
9. 14 And here he hath authority from The High-Priests,
To bind all those who call-upon-themselves Thy Name.

As Saul's men were reporting everywhere, according to their orders.

9. 15 But The Lord said unto him,
Go, for this man is a "Vessel of Election"[1] to me,
To bear My Name before
Gentiles and Kings, and
Sons of Israel ;
9. 16 For I Myself shall show him how many things he must suffer for My Name.
[He did indeed show him !]

SAUL RECEIVES THE HOLY SPIRIT, BY LAYING ON OF HANDS

9. 17 And Ananias went, and entered into the house,
22. 13 And, standing by him,

[1] כְּלִי־בְחִיר

9. 17 And laying hands on him, said Saul, Brother,
The Lord has sent me,
JESUS Who appeared to thee in the road by which thou wast coming ;
That thou mayest see again.
22. 13 Receive thy sight,
9. 17 And be filled with HOLY SPIRIT.
22. 13 " And I," (says Paul,) " That very hour (once more) looked up on him."
9. 18 For straightway there fell from his eyes a kind of fish-scales, and he saw again.

THE DIVINE COMMISSION

22. 14 And Ananias said
The GOD of our fathers was making thee ready-before-hand to know His Will,
And to see The Righteous One, and to hear a VOICE from His Mouth.
22. 15 Because thou shalt be a Testimony-Bearer to Him unto all men [Gentiles and Jews]
About what thou hast seen, and didst hear.
22. 16 And now, why dost thou hesitate ?
Stand up [he had been lying sightless, and praying, before Ananias came],
Be baptised,
And having called-upon-thyself HIS NAME,
Wash away thy sins.

ANANIAS THE PHARISEE

Saul was right in thinking that his drag-net ought to reach as far as Damascus. Ananias and some " disciples " [1] were found there.

God selects a Pharisee-Believer to go to the Pharisee Saul.

[1] Acts 9. 19.

(We Twent.-Cents. have learned now that Pharisees were not all hypocrites. Also we can see how absolutely impossible it was that The Twelve should lay-hands-on Saul.)

Joshua the Nazoræan is alive. Therefore HE could show Himself in Vision to these two Pharisees, if it were His Will to do so.

Ananias knows he is one of the fish within Saul's net.

Ananias also knows JESUS, and His Protecting Power.

Ananias both believes and trusts.

Ananias has begun to learn the Love of JESUS.

Ananias exercises once, one function of an Apostle by Divine Command; but is not thereby "exalted above measure."

He disappears into his former obscurity, until he "falls asleep."

SAUL THE PHARISEE-APOSTLE

Saul receives his Divine Commission as a Generalissimo in the Army of the Living God.

In the Fore-Knowledge of GOD, Saul was a "Vessel of Election."

"*The vessel that* THE POTTER *made, was* (to human eyes) *marred in the hand of* THE POTTER. *So* HE *made it again another vessel as* THE POTTER CHOSE *to make it.*" [1]

"THE POTTER was making Saul ready-before-hand to know HIS WILL (**22.** 14), having separated him, even from his mother's womb, according to the Eternal Purpose which He purposed." [2]

In the full-fill-ment of this Purpose:

"JESUS appeared to him" (**9.** 17);

"Saul heard a VOICE from His Mouth" (**22.** 14);

"HE saw THE RIGHTEOUS ONE, JHVH-TSIDKENU." [3]

[1] Jer. **18.** 4. [2] Gal. **1.** 15; Eph. **3.** 11. [3] Jer. **33.** 16.

" Filled with HOLY SPIRIT,"
He receives his " commission from the HIGH-PRIEST of our Confession " [1]
" To be a Testimony-Bearer " [2]
" *To Gentiles and Kings*, and
" *Sons of Israel*,"
" About what he had seen, and what he heard, (**22.** 15),
" And about what he shall see in the future " (**26.** 16).

SAUL'S BAPTISM AFTER LAYING-ON-OF-HANDS

9. 18 And he stood up, he was baptised, and
9. 19 He took food, and (re-)gained strength.
And he was with the disciples-in-Damascus for some days.

IN THE SYNAGOGUES

9. 20 And forthwith in the synagogues,
As-a-herald-he-proclaimed JESUS, that He is
THE SON OF GOD.

Acting on his commission given by Caiaphas, to enter into the synagogues and speak, he proclaimed there the Testimony for which he had received his Commission given by GOD.

THE EFFECT

9. 21 All who were hearing him were astounded,
And they were saying among themselves,
Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem,
Of those who called-upon-themselves this Name ?
And hither had he come for this intent,
That he might drag them off in bonds to the High-Priests.

[1] Heb. 3. 1. [2] Cf. Acts 1. 8, 22 ; 4. 33 ; 26. 16.

Saul has executed the first part of his commission from Annas, GOD's High-Priest, but not as Annas intended. Having proclaimed the new-enthroned HIGH-PRIEST,[1] Saul has now to hear more from his AUTHORITY.

Leaving the Jews of Damascus to their bewilderment, Saul withdraws alone into the desert, to commune with GOD (Gal. **1.** 17).

' *A great and strong wind* ' had passed over Jerusalem ; ' an *earthquake* ' of agony had ' *rent the mountains* ' of conceit, and ' *broken in pieces the rocks* ' of fixed opinions ; ' *the Fire of* JHVH *had fallen* ' upon Saul, ' *and* ' would ' *consume* ' him the living ' *burnt-offering, with the wood, and the stones, and the dust,*' " the hay and the stubble " ; ' *and* ' would ' *lick up all the water that was in the trench* ' of Pharisaic Tradition ;

" THE LORD *was in the wind,*"

" THE LORD *was in the earthquake,*"

" THE LORD *was in the fire,*"

and now will come " *the still, small, voice,*" audible only to the ear of the Christian ' *Elijah.*'

GOD had promised in the closing words of the Old Testament :

> " *Behold, I will send you Elijah the Prophet,*
> *before the terrible Day of* THE LORD *come.*
> *And he shall turn the heart of the* Israel-*fathers to the* Gentile-*children, and the heart of the* Gentile-*children to their* Israel-*fathers.*"

Till that be accomplished,

> " *I come and smite the earth with a ban.*"

Elijah came, in John the Baptist.

Moses yet lived, in " The Law."

The new ' *Elijah came near to all the people* ' of the world.

[1] Hebr. **3.** 1 ; **7.** 24-26 ; **8.** 1.

How Paul strove to fill-full Malachi's words, Acts **13** to **28**, and Romans **10** and **11**, tell us.

In this respect, his life-work hitherto has seemed a failure.

GOD is working His Purpose out.

But the

MOSES OF THE GENTILES

has been '*leading God's People-of*-Earth *out of the Egyptian darkness*' of Heathendom.

And when all-the-world, '*which* THE LORD *hath chosen to be a peculiar people unto himself*';

'*Because* THE LORD so loved the World that He gave HIS ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON';

'*Not because they are more in number than*' the rest of created beings,

'*But because* THE LORD *loveth them*;

'*And because* HE *will keep the oath which* HE *sware unto Abraham, saying*,

'*In thee and in thy* SEED, which is Christ, *shall all the families of The Earth be blessed*';

And when Elijah-Paul can finish his work;

Then Moses-Paul shall '*head the people*,' as they enter '*The Promised Land*.'[1]

THE GREAT WAR

The great GOD-sin War has been waged for nineteen centuries, since The King was enthroned, and since He commissioned His apostolic Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Armies.

Again and again has the world been deluged in blood. Many a time has the enemy seemed to be on the point of breaking our line.

But it never has been broken, and never will be.

[1] Gen. **12.** 3; Exod. **3.** 10; **10.** 21; Deut. **7.** 6–8; 1 Kings **18.** 21, 38; **19.** 11, 12; Mal. **4.** 5, 6; 1 Cor. **3.** 12; Gal. **3.** 16.

CHAPTER R

ELIM

FULL-FILL-MENT

LET us take breath, after that interminable Chapter Q; and rest ourselves awhile by the palms and springs of Elim.[1]

In all our quotations from the Old Testament above, we have a full-fill-ment. Those passages were *not* written centuries ago for the purpose of being copied into this book of ours. But 'they were written for our learning.'

So Christian writers of all ages have quoted them, and one has said,

> "Yet I doubt not through the ages, one increasing purpose runs,
> And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns." [2]

And this is full-fill-ment, or filling fuller.

THE RIVER OF GOD

If we in the twentieth century 'trace the course of all things back to the first,' we find that the course of the Christian Church of the centuries, now a mighty stream, first issued forth as a trickling rill '*from under The-Threshold-of-The-House-Eastward*,' called the Portico of Solomon,[3] or The Solomon-Porchway or Entrance of The Temple, and passed through Damascus.

[1] Exod. 15. 27. [2] Tennyson, "Locksley Hall."
[3] See plan facing p. 75.

'In —— years the waters were to the ankles; in another —— years the waters were to the knees; in another —— years the waters were to the loins; in yet another —— years the waters will have risen, waters to swim in, a river that cannot be passed through.' [1]

But the measuring-reed is in the hand of The Angel, not in ours.

PROPORTION

What caused that stream to spring forth from The House on the top of a rock? [2]

Something happened in Jerusalem.

Something happened near Damascus.

Opinions have varied as to what those "somethings" were. The earliest "view" that we hear of is that:

The Twelve were drunk.[3]

One of the latest, by a very agnostic Agnostic, (hereinafter called a.v.a.A,) is, that Saul had a sunstroke. It was midday, he had had a long ride at a furious pace, and the day was probably hot.

As we are still *recubantes sub tegmine palmarum*, let me gather you a date. It is from my common-place-book.

A Third-Form boy, engaged in the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties, met and faced the following problem:

"A scuttle of coals is charged 6*d*., when coals are 28*s*. a ton. How much ought the scuttle to hold?"

He fought the fearsome beast boyfully, and showed up

56 tons. Ans.

I wrote across the paper, "Good old Coal-scuttle."

I said to him, "My dear Podge, I can forgive you for

[1] Ezek. 47. 1–12; Rev. 22. 1. [2] See p. 142. [3] See p. 55.

multiplying, when you ought to have divided; but you should see a specialist.

"Go and look at a coal-scuttle; and try to have *some* regard for proportion."

* * * * *

a.v.a.A. has faced the problem—

Given the present position of the Catholic Church, what happened at Damascus?

Sunstroke. Ans.

But something seems out of proportion!

* * * * *

We must take our journey from Elim.

CHAPTER S (A.D. 37–39)

THE GARDEN OF ELOHA [1]

NEUR-OLO-KAUTŌMA

THE life-long principles and beliefs, which have entwined themselves through the whole fibre of Saul's being; which are the very sensory- and motor-nerves of his soul; are scorched out of him by the fire of THE HOLY SPIRIT.

He has been able to proclaim the GREAT HIGH PRIEST; but human nature can endure no more at present.

We must turn to one of Paul's own letters, which gives us just the information we require.

Gal. 1. 17. I went into Arabia.

EDEN

Turning to our Atlas we find that Arabia is a country which is about the size of Western Europe. Paul, no doubt intentionally, gives no hint of the spot to which he and his body-servant Titus (?) retired.

It was into what we Westerns would call " the desert," by which we mean, a-place-where-there-isn't-a-decent-hotel-to-be-found-for-miles-and-miles.

To Abraham it meant '*the garden which God planted*,' and which, from Palestine, was mainly '*Eastward*.'

It was the Garden-of-Eloha to Abraham, and is still the Garden-of-Allah to the Race of Ishmael.

[1] Hebrew 'Eloha' = Arabic 'Allah' = English 'God.'

In the very early days they called it ' *The Garden-of-Delight* ' (Hebrew—*of Eden*).

In nearly every direction it was hemmed in by the Great Water. And the Great Water, from which there rose the clouds which watered the Garden, extended into the Garden in four great heads-of-water,

Red Sea, Nile, Tigris, and Euphrates.[1]

This Garden of God, of which Arabia is but a portion, is happily still undefiled by factory-chimneys and squalid slums; and it reaches almost to the very walls of Damascus.

Saul goes into the Garden-of-Delight to commune with JHVH-ELOHIM.[2]

English folk may find a bit of this Garden on Dartmoor, where sometimes the pedestrian may wander from early morn to dewy eve, and never meet any one to speak with but Elohim; *i.e.* the Powers-which-are-manifest-in-Nature; and which, though apparently diverse, are yet One Force.

THE ARISTOCRAT OF J H V H

Now, most Semites are natural aristocrats, until they are vulgarised by contact with Aryans.

And in the Kingdom of JHVH, THE KING Himself has ennobled the Family of Abraham with a patent of nobility, by the title of " The Elect."

The literature of this Family is the most aristocratically-spiritual in the world.

Their descendants to-day have hardly a stain of mésalliance on their escutcheon, since the days when they fully recognised their position as the Aristocracy of The Kingdom of GOD.

[1] See p. 133. [2] *The* LORD GOD, Gen. 2. 8–15.

They are exclusive no doubt, but that is often the tendency of aristocrats.

But then, their genealogical-tree reaches back to the further side of Tut-ankh-Amen's Tomb.

I fear our Anglo-Saxon records got drowned in that swampy ground round the mouth of the Elbe.

THE PHARISEE

Now, the most exclusive of all This Peerage was the Pharisee. Saul was born a Pharisee, he lived a Pharisee, and he died a Pharisee, proud (up to a certain point) of the Title.

In order that we of the twentieth century may get an accurate balance of thought, let us have recourse to

Our Averagethought Table.

Pharisee	=	Hypocrite
Sadducee	=	Semi-Infidel
Samaritan	=	Kind-hearted
Gentile	=	Gent.

Saul's Averagethought Table.

Pharisee	=	Righteous
Sadducee	=	Priestly
Samaritan	=	" Pre-Moslem "
Gentile	=	" Nigger."

The Gentile " Niggers " may have white skins, but they have black hearts.

He is to go to them, live with them, teach them, eat with them, drink with them, pray with them, and offer them a Patent of a Divine Peerage equal with his own.

When we go on to Acts **13** to **28** we shall see a result.

The " Niggers " will often stone Paul for his offer, at the instigation of the aristocrats of Saul's own Family.

But another result is that " Many have come from the East, and from the West, and from the North, and from the South, and have sat down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of GOD." [1]

THE JEW

The Jew, at that time, could not easily overcome his prejudices against " niggers." Shakespeare well expresses his attitude, " I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following ; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you."

For many Christian centuries it has been hard for " God's Elect " to see Gentile parvenus seated in their place ; who smashed up their Temple, and have most regularly, and consistently stolen their property century after century.

They have had some revenge as they have, at times, watched Christian " Niggers " strutting about with tin halos tilted well over their eyes.

THE APOSTLE

So the descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, goes into the Garden-of-Eloha to commune with JHVH-ELOHIM.[2]

He tells us afterwards that the Good-News which he preached throughout his after-life was preached by

Gal. 1. 1 An Apostle,
(*a*) Not appointed by men,
(*b*) Not appointed through other apostles,
(*c*) But through Joshua,
Messiah of GOD THE FATHER,
Who raised Him up from dead.
11 And this Gospel is not according to man, for,

[1] Luke 13. 29. [2] Elohim is the plural of Eloha = God.

he says,

12 (*a*) I did not receive it from man,
(*b*) Nor was I discipled,
(*c*) But (it came) through Revelation of JESUS CHRIST.

This Gospel, and this Revelation, and the renewing of the nerve-system of his soul, were filled-full in Saul in The Garden-of-Eloha.

RETURN TO DAMASCUS

Gal. 1. 17 And again I returned unto Damascus.

Or, taking up Luke's account once more,

Acts 9. 22 Saul was acquiring power,
And he was putting to confusion the Jews who
Were living in Damascus,
Showing by putting (Scriptures) together that
This is Messiah,
or, The Messiah is . . . This.

Saul was not making any boastful declarations about his Vision ; but proving, by the use of Holy Scriptures, that The Messiah Who had come was The Messiah Whom the Old Testament foretold.[1]

THE ESCAPE

9. 23 And while many days were being filled-full,
The Jews conspired to kill him ;
24 But their plot became known to Saul.

In his Second Letter to Corinth, Paul says :

2 Cor. 11. 32 In (not outside of) Damascus, the Ethnarch (governor) of Aretas the King was keeping men on the look-out in the city of the Damascenes to apprehend me ;

[1] Cf. S. Luke 24. 25–27.

33 And through an aperture,[1]
I was let down in a basket,[2]
Through the wall,
And escaped out of his hands.

Luke says :

Acts 9. 24 And they were closely watching the gates also, both day and night [they would watch *windows* too], in order that they might kill him ;

25 But his disciples took him through the wall by night,
And let him down,
Lowering him in a basket.

As the Israelites refused to receive Moses in Egypt, when he went to them as an Egyptian Prince, so now the Jews who were living in heathen Damascus refuse the young Israelitish noble, because he comes to them as the herald of a Suffering Messiah who has a message for " niggers."

Paul tells the Corinthians how he felt that, possibly, he showed weakness.

" Why did I not remain and undergo Stephen's fate ? I own my weakness to you."

" I must boast ! How I hate it ! It does not suit me ! "

" For I shall [because I must], come to Visions and Revelations of The Lord."

" I feel a fool ! You compelled me ! " [3]

A CONTRAST

Saul the Representative of the High-Priests set out on that far-off day through the Damascus Gate ' *in pride and arrogancy*.' [4]

[1] Probably, an outlet for rain-water.
[2] A sort of large Netted-String-Bag.
[3] 2 Cor. 11. 30–33 ; 12. 1, 11. [4] See p. 215.

GOD THE SON appeared to him in open Vision.

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT filled him with Himself.

GOD gave him a commission to go to the whole world with His Own Message.

Saul has withdrawn to the Garden-of-Eloha to commune with GOD, and to learn his message.

He returns to Damascus to deliver it.

For some time (perhaps some weeks) he gives it with unanswerable power, basing it entirely on Holy Scripture, and not on any ' views ' of his own.

The result is that those of his own Nation who are living there (Hellenists) not only reject the message, but conspire to kill him.

They even enlist the help of the ' nigger ' representative of King Aretas.

With the aid of a few High-Jews who believe him, he escapes from Damascus like

" A thief in the night."

A STAKE IN THE FLESH

GOD on earth in human flesh was meek and lowly. Therefore those who would do His Work on earth must learn humility.

The pricks-with-the-goad in days gone by had stung. But this rejection and humiliation is worse than goad-pricks.

Paul does not tell us what he means when he says :

2 Cor. 12. 7 In order that I might not be exalted over much by the transcendence of the revelations,
There was given to me
A stake in the flesh,
A messenger of Satan,
That he (it) may keep on buffeting me
So that I may not be exalted over much.

8 Concerning this, thrice did I beseech The Lord,
That it might depart from me.
9 And He has said to me,
Sufficient for thee is My grace;
For power is being perfected in weakness.

What this " stake " was, Paul does not tell us.

We shall venture the suggestion that it was this—

Something which had the effect that-wherever-Saul-(or Paul)-proclaimed-GOD's-message,-he-immediately-infuriated-his-own-Nation.

We shall therefore picture him returning to the Garden-of-God, to wrestle long in prayer, that this grievous antipathy may cease.

But it never did, up to the end of his earthly life.

Do we not see his last effort to rid himself of it in that anonymous Epistle to the Hebrews?

'I know the appearance of my body is even more feeble than when I wrote to Corinth; and my spoken message is of no account. To Jews I am an offence, to Greeks I am a fool, when I open my mouth. But they say my letters are weighty and strong. I will make one more effort to gain the desire of my heart, that salvation of Israel for which I make my daily supplication.' [1]

One day he will '*see of the travail of his soul, and will be satisfied.*' [2]

[1] Cf. 2 Cor. **10.** 10; 1 Cor. **1.** 22; Rom. **10.** 1. [2] Isa. **53.** 11.

CHAPTER T (A.D. 39)

IN THE THIRD YEAR

VISIT TO PETER

Gal. 1. 18 Then after three years I went to Jerusalem to make the acquaintance of Peter,
And I remained with him fifteen days.

We must note that just as, in Jewish reckoning, Friday night to Sunday morning is called three days, so here this expression three years means a period somewhere between just-over-a-year, and just-under-three-years. We may think of it as what we should call about-two-years.

Luke says :

Acts 9. 26 And he came to Jerusalem and was trying to cement (glue) himself with the disciples.

With the High-Jews, not the Apostles. Saul had received a Divine Commission, but he does not at once take up his stand on a level with The Twelve. (Look up Acts 5. 13.)

And they were all fearing him, not believing that he is a disciple.

He may be a wolf in sheep's clothing.

27 But Barnabas seized him.

[As he was going away again to the desert in despair.]

And took him to The Apostles.

One friendly hand is stretched out, and God knits the hearts of these two men together. Saul perhaps tells to Barnabas in private, the story which probably he never told publicly until the occasion narrated in Acts 22. 1–22.

We judge this by the silence in which they listened to his speech (as if he were telling them something that the world at large had never heard); until he mentioned 'niggers' (Gentiles).

27 And he (Saul) described to them in full
How he saw THE LORD, on the road,
And that HE spoke to him,
And how in Damascus
He spoke-openly-in-public, in the NAME of JESUS.

When, in the verse above, we have read of The Apostles, we have perhaps pictured The Twelve assembled together. But Paul tells us:

Gal. No other of the Apostles did I see,
1. 19 Only James, the brother of The LORD.
What I am writing to you,
Behold, before GOD,
I am not lying.

There is, however, no reason whatever why we should suppose that, after all these years, The Twelve are still assembling as a body in The Portico of Solomon. It is much more probable that they have for a long time been evangelising throughout Galilee, Samaria, and Judæa, according to their orders.

From this time onward the only members of the College-of-The-Twelve, of whom we hear as being in Jerusalem, are Peter, James, and John. And with them

is associated, with Apostolic rank, James the brother of The Lord.[1]

He probably wrote " The General Epistle of James," to Hellenists, in those Earliest Days.

ACCEPTANCE BY PETER AND JAMES

9. 28 And he (Saul) was with them (Peter and James)
Going out and coming in,

This Aramaic expression [2] implies constant companionship, as in Acts **1.** 21.

At Jerusalem.

We note that it was not in Judæa generally.

9. 29 He was speaking-openly-in-public
In the NAME of The Lord ;
He was both speaking and arguing with the Hellenists.

(Perhaps on two Sabbaths in the L— C— A— Synagogue.[3])

Saul takes the same course that he did in Damascus. And, as the one who approved Stephen's martyrdom, he strives to carry on Stephen's work among the Hellenists.

But the same result follows, as at Damascus. As soon as a Gospel-to-Niggers is mentioned, The Nation is up in arms.

If Messiah is not come to " The Elect " only, they will have none of Him, nor of His heralds.

KILL HIM !

9. 29 But they were making attempts to kill him.
22. 17 And while I was praying in The Temple,
I fell into a trance,

[1] See S. Matt. 13. 55. [2] Cf. Ps. 121. 8. [3] See p. 124.

18 And I saw HIM speaking to me,
Make haste, and go quickly out of Jerusalem.
Because they will not admit from thee
Testimony about ME.
19 And I said, Lord,
They are fully aware that I was imprisoning and
beating in all the synagogues those who believe
on Thee.
20 And when the blood was being poured out
Of Stephen, Thy Testimony-Bearer,
I myself stood-in-authority, and was approving,
And taking charge of the garments of his assassins.

Saul earnestly besought The Lord, that this ' blinding-in-part ' of the hearts of The Nation, for whom he ' never ceases to pray day by day ' ; this fatal obsession of hatred against himself ; may be taken from him.

Surely, they must see that *I* am sincere.

But it cannot be. The hatred will increase, not diminish.

Those who rejected THE MASTER, will reject the servant, who brings again THE MASTER'S Message.

The fact that the man who brings the message proves his sincerity by publicly repudiating all his former acts and words :

Weighs as nothing with them.

And The Lord said,
22. 21 Depart [The Nation refuses ME] ;
I will send thee out, far forth, unto Nations.

For it was said unto Abram אבר־עם (?), " *Thou shalt be a Father of many Nations.*" [1] אבר־עים (?).

The Editor suggests the possibility that in further excavations at Mugheir (Ur of the Chaldees) the name

[1] Gen. 17. 4.

Ibr-'ahim (= Father of nations) may one day be found as that of a Prince of Sumir who voluntarily left the palace, as did Moses, and Sakya-Mouni.

TO TARSUS

9. 30 And the brethren, [recognising facts,]
Took him down to Cæsarea,
And sent him forth to Tarsus.

Gal. Then I came into the climes-of-Syria-and-
1. 21 Cilicia. [These 2 ' climes ' were under one Roman governor.]

Thus the Generalissimo goes on drinking of his King's Cup.

Have we not been somewhat dull of hearing, as we listened to that Prayer in the Garden ?—

" Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me." [1]

Did not the Beloved Disciple tell us what that Cup really was ? Not the Cup of physical suffering, great as that was.

Not *only* the bearing of the sins of the world.

He came for that Purpose.

But to ' come to " His Own," ' whom He had watched and guided for centuries, and to know that ' they received Him not ! ' To find that His own nearest earthly friends ' forsook Him and fled ! '

That wrung the Heart of GOD.

And now His servant

Came to his own Nation, and they received him not ;
Came to the High-Jews, and they sent him to Tarsus ;
Came to his brethren the Hellenists, and they received him not.

[1] S. Luke 22. 42.

One drop of comfort there was.

He came to two of his fellow-Apostles, and they received him openly.

For years his bitter foes, the Judaisers, strove to take away even that drop of comfort.

Thus Luke ends Book II. of his Second Volume :

They shipped him back to Tarsus.

BOOK III

THE CONVERSION OF PETER TO CATHOLICITY

CHAPTER U

THEN INDEED

PEACE

9. 31 Then indeed The Church throughout the whole of Judæa, and Galilee, and Samaria had peace.

High-Jews throughout :

(*a*) Judæa, the ' county ' round about Jerusalem,

(*b*) ' *Galilee-of-the-Nations*,' the ' county ' where Israelites were rather mixed up with ' niggers,'

(*c*) Samaria, the ' county ' of the Pre-Moslem folk,

at last could breathe, and live, in peace and quietness.

All those ' Gospel-to-Niggers ' firebrands were quieted.

Stephen was dead.

He had slept-over into The Promised Land, out of the stormy waters of the Sea of Generation-on-earth.

Philip was cured of his stormy-petrel-ways, and was ' encaged ' at Cæsarea, an enclave in the ' county ' of Samaria.

Saul had been shipped back to his Tarsian home. ' *And* **then indeed** *the land had rest four years.*'

Is not Luke indulging in just two words of justifiable irony ? He is looking at his master, aristocrat of aristocrats, lying exhausted on his pallet, after painfully tracing out those " large letters " with " his own (shapeless) hand," ready for the ' fair copy ' of his amanuensis.[1]

[1] Gal. 6. 11.

MSS.

Now, in that collection of Codex A. . . . Cursive manuscripts. . . . Syriac Version. . . . etc., of which we spoke in Chapter P,[1] and which we shall hereinafter call "The MSS.," for shortness; we find that, in this verse 31, some of these ancient writings say "The Church," and some say "The Churches."

In order that you, Most Excellent Reader, may have a *glimpse* of those Higher-Critics, and Biblical-Critics at work, we shall here tell you that

"The Church" is the expression found in:

Codex A, or Alexandrine Codex, in Petrograd,
Codex B, or Vatican Codex, now in the Vatican Library at Rome,
Codex C, or Ephraem's Codex, in the Imperial Library at Paris,
All Versions in the Syriac language,
The Version in the Coptic language,
The Version in the Sahidic language,
The Version in the Æthiopic language,
The Version in the Armenian language;
In quotations from the writings of—
Dionysius of Alexandria,
Second Edition of Theophylact,
Etcetera.

While, "The Churches" is the expression found in:

Codex E, or the Codex of Basle,
Codex G, or the Harleian Codex, in the British Museum,
Codex H, or Wolfe's Codex, now in the Library at Hamburg,
The Philoxenian Syriac Version,

[1] See p. 209.

The Arabic Polyglot Versions ;
In quotations from the works of—
Chrysostom,
First Edition of Theophylact,
Etcetera.

Whereby, Most Excellent, you shall gain some small knowledge of the labours of those who have thus examined every letter
of every word,
of every Verse,
of every Chapter,
of every Book,
of The Sacred Writings,
in hundreds of MSS.,
written in many languages,
to provide you with your
Revised Version of The Bible.

FISH

We shall not now 'burn midnight oil' in an effort to decide whether Luke, 1900 years ago, here wrote :
" The Church " or " The Churches."

Either way, we catch sight on our journey, of those High-Jew " Congregations " in Palestine, whose primary origin was the Solomon Porchway, or Entrance, of The Temple,[1] and which are being united into One Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church.

Now that those 'extreme' men are quieted, the separate congregations of The Congregation enjoy rest and peace for some years.

But, ere long, the bitterest imaginable persecutions, even worse than those of which we have heard in Twentieth-Century-Russia, will drive " The Christians "

[1] See Plan, facing p. 75.

to become a Secret Society, called " The Mystery." The members will all address one another as Brother ——, and they will have their secret signs, their secret ritual, their secret passwords ; and these alone will designate them, whether as catechumens, disciples, or " Master-Builders," [1] throughout the Roman Empire.

One of the secret passwords was ' Fish.' [You remember Saul's Net, Most Excellent ?] This in Greek was spelled I-Ch-Th-U-S. (ἰχθυς.)

To the initiated it spoke of the GREAT FISHERMAN, **I**esous, **Ch**ristos, **Th**eou (of God), **U**ios (the Son), **S**oter (Saviour).

If a Christian in the course of conversation with a man whose religious views he did not know, asked him casually, ' Do you like fish ? ' nothing was revealed.

The same question asked of an unknown Christian would reveal two brothers to each other, both caught in the Net of Joshua the Nazoræan.

The initiate, after repeated ' trials of his faith ' [2] with ' the approbation ' [3] of the guardians of ' The Mystery,' [4] by showing himself willing to undergo ' examination ' [5] and give ' proof ' when called upon by those in authority ; ' passed [6] *from* simple *strength* [7] *to* the *strength* of established ' [8] position ; from the grade of catechumen to that of disciple.

He was then ' raised ' [9] to the status of communicant, in which he was fully instructed in that ' passing out of death into life,' [10] through the Death of the GREAT MASTER BUILDER.[11]

Finally, for such as had been willing to do spade-work,

[1] 1 Cor. **3.** 10. [2] 1 Peter **1.** 7 ; Jas. **1.** 3.
[3] Rom. **14.** 18 ; **16.** 10 ; 1 Cor. **11.** 19 ; **16.** 3 ; Phil. **1.** 10.
[4] S. Mark **4.** 11 ; Rom. **16.** 25 ; Eph. **3.** 3.
[5] 1 Cor. **9.** 3 ; **11.** 28 ; 2 Cor. **13.** 5. [6] 1 Jno. **3.** 14.
[7] Ps. **84.** 7. [8] Rom. **16.** 25 ; 1 Peter **5.** 10.
[9] 2 Cor. **4.** 14 ; Eph. **2.** 6.
[10] S. Jno. **5.** 24 ; 1 Jno. **3.** 14 ; 1 Cor. **15.** 21. [11] 1 Cor. **3.** 10.

as Saul did in Syria-and-Cilicia[1] for three years, the most Sacred Word of all, newly-discovered, as it were, under the very ruins-of-the-Temple-of-Jewish-Religion, the Sacred Word TRINITY, and its symbol △ were entrusted to those who saw the sky above them as the Sacred Arch of the ' Throne of God.'[2]

And throughout the whole course are three cardinal virtues : ' Love of the brethren ; Relief of the poor ; and Christ the Truth.'

QUIET PROGRESS

9. 31 The Church (or The Churches)
Was (were) being built up, and
Was (were) advancing in *The Fear of The Lord*, and
Was (were) increasing by the Paracleting of THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Our Lord had spoken of THE HOLY SPIRIT as " The Paraclete " (translated into English, " Comforter ").[3]

A Paraclete is one who is always at hand to advise, guide, strengthen, and generally to aid, whenever **called upon** to do so.

All the above passage (verse 31) is made up of words which were in common everyday use, but which were recognisable as taken from the ' Ritual of the Society,' when used by believers between themselves.

Through these past years, JESUS had been at the helm, only apparently asleep ; and now for a time He quells the storm, so that the Ship of the Church may reach the shore of that greater ' *Galilee-of-the-Nations*,' which we call ' All The World.' Since that date storms have continually arisen, but the Ship is still afloat, and ' *He will bring them unto the haven where they would be.*'

[1] Gal. **1.** 21. [2] Acts **7.** 49.
[3] This word, to-day, has lost its strong character.

BROKEN PITCHERS AND TORCHES

Is it surprising that we do not find The Twelve more in the forefront during that time that Joshua, Stephen, Philip, Saul fought the battles of THE LORD ?

Joshua the Nazoræan had had great apparent success, but had fallen ; a Sacrifice because of Jewish sin.

The Twelve had mustered an army of High-Jews, that they might lead them into ' the Possession of the Nations.' [1]

Now they see their progress checked, by the zeal of some of their own officers. Recruiting from their own countrymen seemed to be at a standstill, while these ' fire-brands ' disturbed the camp.

Now it was no more given to The Twelve to see the future than it is to us.

Peter will ere long realise that first 22,000 of the 32,000 [2] must be allowed to go back to the home of Judaism as ' the Judaisers ' ; and that it will be by the 300 men who come out from among ' Those-of-the-circumcision,' and profess and call themselves " Christians," that THE LORD will defeat the hosts of Midianitish-sin-in-the-world.[3]

' *Saul may blow the trumpet ;* but *the Hebrews* will not *hear*,' yet.[4]

No one of The Brethren can *possibly* see that " the fall of God's People " is to bring about " the riches of the world." And still we look for ' the fulness of " God's Elect People of Israel " to bring much more of the riches of the Wisdom and Knowledge of GOD.' [5]

[1] Acts **7.** 45.
[2] Of course we do not suggest that this was the exact number of High-Jews.
[3] See Judg. **7.** 3–7.
[4] 1 Sam. **13.** 3.
[5] Rom. **11.** 1, 12, 33.

UNITY

It is not meet for us of the twentieth century to criticise or blame them. Their self-abnegation when they admitted instantly into the Circle-of-The-Twelve their former persecutor and opponent was marvellous. And it was by the guidance of THE HOLY SPIRIT that that 'ox' Saul was sent to begin ploughing the ground in Syria-and-Cilicia, to make it ready for the sowing of the seed.

To the People of Israel JHVH first sent The Promised Messiah. HE delivered The Message solely to them. So far as we know, the only 'outsiders' to whom HE gave it were Jairus, the woman of Samaria, and the Syrophœnician woman.

"His own" received Him not.

Stephen and Saul brought The Message; but they announced a Gospel-for-all-Nations.

They were rejected.

Had The Twelve all begun where Stephen did, and so offended every Israelitish religious feeling, Israel would have had an excuse.

Therefore in God's Providence The Twelve are so kept for a time in partial knowledge (S. John **16.** 12), that they can whole-heartedly deliver The Message to their Nation, unbiassed by The Light which has come to the hearts of Stephen and Saul.

At this point of Luke's history, therefore, we see The Twelve working zealously in Palestine, probably 'two and two,' still orthodox High-Jews, still in favour with "the people," still anxiously striving for the salvation of The Nation, and still hoping that their efforts shall succeed.

To many acute minds the enormous difference of outlook between Paul and Peter has been fully apparent.

And, indeed, nothing but the indwelling Power of THE HOLY SPIRIT could have maintained the feeling of brotherhood between these two Apostles; nothing but Divine Power could have prevented feelings of bitterness and acts of opposition such as were displayed in later centuries by the (less fully inspired) '. . . ists' and '. . . ists,' of every age.

But Luke shows, in his Book I, that though he is the 'Boswell' of S. Paul, he had learned from his Mentor to cultivate and exercise, with genuine catholicity, true 'love of all the brethren.'

CHAPTER V (A.D. 43)

THE FIRST EPISCOPAL VISITATION ON RECORD

ÆNEAS

9. 32 It came to pass that
Peter, making a (diocesan) visitation,
Went down to the saints who were living at Lydda.[1]
33 And he found there a certain man, Æneas by name, bed-ridden for eight years, on a pallet, who was paralysed.

Luke here uses a Macedonian word for pallet. This is one of the evidences of his Macedonian connexions.

34 And Peter said to him,
Æneas, Joshua Messiah healeth thee ;
Stand up, and spread thy pallet for thyself.
And he stood up forthwith.

As always, the Apostle does not claim for *himself* the power of healing.

35 And all the inhabitants of Lydda and Sharon [1] saw him ;
And they turned to The Lord.

TABITHA

36 And in Joppa [1] there lived a certain female-disciple, by name Tabitha, which, being translated (into Greek) means Dorcas [into English, Gazelle] ;

[1] See Map, p. 213.

She used to be full of good works and almsdeeds which she was doing.

37 And it came to pass, in those days, that she fell sick, and died ;
And they washed her,
And laid her upstairs [in the women's part of the house].

38 And Lydda being near to Joppa,
The disciples heard that Peter was in it (Lydda),
And sent two men to him, entreating,
Do not scruple to come on to us [in your visitation].

Gazelle's body had been ceremonially purified, and was in the women's upper apartments ; hence Peter might come to the house for a meeting of the disciples, without fear of ceremonial defilement. They are anxious not to miss the visit which had been arranged (?).

39 And Peter arose and went with them.
And when he arrived, they took him upstairs.
And all the widows stood by him wailing,

with the usual Jewish " great lamentation." (See Acts **8.** 2, and S. Luke **8.** 52.)

And exhibiting the chitons and himations which Gazelle was making when she was with them.

The **Chiton** was a woollen shirt worn next the body, both by men and women, reaching to the knees, or sometimes to the feet.

The **Himation** was an outer wide cloak or mantle, thrown over the Chiton. Arabs to-day call it the jibbeh, or abbayeh.

At Stephen's stoning, the witnesses took off their himations, for greater freedom of action, and Saul took charge of them. When a man wanted to run, he girded

the himation or jibbeh, with his girdle round his waist, so that his legs might be free.

A shepherd's himation was generally of undressed sheep-skin, with no sleeves, and with a hole in the middle through which he put his head.

In the case of a man of rank, they were usually white.[1]

"The coat without seam"[2] of Our Lord was His Chiton; probably woven in one piece by His Blessed Mother. These garments have survived among us until the present day, and are now known as the alb, girdle, and chasuble.

40 But Peter turned them all out,
Fell on his knees,
And was praying.

Moved probably by a sudden Inspiration,
He turned to the body, and said,
Tabitha, stand up.
And she opened her eyes,
And seeing Peter,
She sat up.

41 And, giving her his hand,

He would not touch her body before this, because of ceremonial defilement.

He raised her up (on her feet).
Then calling out to the men-saints and the widows,
He presented her living.

We ought to compare with these two accounts Our Lord's mode of procedure which is recorded in S. Luke **5.** 18–26, **8.** 49–56.

When HE raised the daughter of Jairus, HE turned every one out except Peter, James, John, and the child's parents.

[1] Cf. Eccles. **9.** 8.

[2] S. John **19.** 23. Possibly S. John could have told us how it was bought back from the Roman soldier.

Neither HE nor His Apostles worked miracles for the sake of their effect on ordinary bystanders. And we should beware of supposing that the "wonders and signs," of which we hear in Acts, were only what we to-day call "miracles": neither, in all probability were "miracles" of *common* occurrence in these earliest days. Luke is here not recording "miracles" just because they were striking events. But in accordance with his expressed aim, he is 'tracing the course of things accurately from the first'; to show how THE HOLY SPIRIT led Peter, in his ordinary pastoral work, to Lydda, where a 'sign' was given him; then to Joppa eleven miles away, where a still greater 'sign' was vouchsafed.

Then a stay of 'many days' gave time for the news of his presence to spread to Philip and other disciples at Cæsarea, thirty-one miles to the North, along the coast. And Peter, in his joy and exultation little thinks that he is being lured on by THE GREAT FISHERMAN to his own conversion to the Gospel-to-Niggers; or that he will thenceforward see it as Catholicity; or that this pastoral visitation will eventually result in his flight from Jerusalem.

Later on he will tell his friends that all God's leading is into

"True Grace of GOD." [1]

42 And it became known from all, [the news spread from Joppa]
And many believed upon The Lord.
43 And it came to pass that he stayed a good many days in Joppa at the house of one Simon a tanner.

[1] 1 Pet. 5. 12.

THE VISION OF CORNELIUS

10. 1 Now a certain man in Cæsarea, named Cornelius,
a centurion in a Cohort called The Italian
Cohort [of the Syrian (?) Legion],

as we might speak to-day of a Captain of a platoon in the . . . Regiment,

2 A devout, God-fearing man, as were all his
family ;
Who used to give much alms to The Nation,
And to pray to GOD regularly ;
3 Saw in a Vision,
Openly,
As if about the-Ninth-Hour-of-the-Day,[1]
An angel of GOD, entering to him, and saying,
Cornelius.
4 And he gazed at him, and becoming frightened,
He said, What is it, Lord ?
And he said to him,
Thy prayers, and thine almsdeeds went up as a
record before GOD.
5 And send men to Joppa, now, and summon
Simon, surnamed Peter.
6 He is a guest in the house of one Simon a tanner,
whose house is by the sea.

Here in early times, a copyist added :

" He shall tell thee what thou must do."

7 As soon as the angel who was speaking to him
went away, he called two of his household-
menservants, and a devout soldier [one who
believed in JHVH], one of his regular attendants

[1] Nones. The term used for the offering of Evening Prayer (Evensong) in The Temple. See Acts **3**. 1.

8 [his bat-man], and having given them full instructions, he sent them to Joppa.

It was about 3 p.m. when the angel appeared, and they had thirty miles to go. They seem to have started at once, and to have slept the night on the way.

THE VISION OF PETER

9 Now on the morrow, as they were on their journey,
and were nearing the city, Peter went up on
the house-top to offer up (the usual mid-day) [1]
prayer,
About the sixth hour.[2]

10 And he became very hungry, and desired to eat.
And as they were getting the meal ready, there
came an ec-stasy (trance) upon him,

ANCIENT SHIP, SHOWING TRIANGULAR SAILS.

11 And he beheld the sky opened,
And descending, a certain vessel like a great
main-sail, with four corners [instead of three],
Being let down upon the ground.

12 And in it there were-coming-into-being all the
quadrupeds, and reptiles, and winged creatures
of the sky.

[1] Ps. 55. 17. [2] Sext.

Peter had a vision of The Creation. He saw in this trance the coming-into-being of both " clean " and " unclean " creatures ; and the message was that GOD had made all.

13 And there was A Voice speaking to him,
Arise, Peter,
Sacrifice ! and Eat !

The Jewish worshipper shared in the flesh of the sacrifice, a part of which was burnt up as an offering to JHVH ; and thus he expressed his communion with GOD in the sacred meal-rite. See 1 Cor. **10.** 16–22. This custom is common to religions all over the world, and is primitive.

14 But Peter said, By no means, Lord ! [1]
Because never did I eat (this which is) all common and unclean.
15 And (there was) A Voice again to him,
What GOD made clean, do not thou make common (unclean).
16 And this happened thrice.[2]
And straightway the vessel was taken up into the sky.

Israel had been told to keep themselves separate from heathen uncleanness, but they were not told to count the nations as in themselves unclean.

" *God said of all that He had made, that it was very good.*"

THE MESSENGERS ARRIVE

Three " common and unclean " Romans arrive.

Peter, as a strict Jew, may talk to them, but may not eat, drink, or pray with them.

[1] Cf. S. Matt. **16.** 22. [2] Cf. S. Luke **22.** 34, 61 ; S. John **21.** 17.

17 But as Peter was quite at a loss in his mind what
the-vision-which-he-saw could be; the men
who were sent by Cornelius were making
enquiries for Simon's house, and stopped at
the porch.
18 And they called out, and enquired
If Simon, surnamed Peter, is here as a guest.
19 And while Peter was thinking within himself
about the Vision,
The SPIRIT said to him,
Behold three men are seeking thee.
20 But arise (from thy knees), and go down,
And journey with them, making no distinction
(between clean and unclean),
Because I have apostled (sent) them.
21 And Peter went down to the men, and said,
Behold I am he whom ye are seeking,
What is the cause why you are come?
22 And they said,
Cornelius a centurion, a righteous God-fearing
man, and one to whom testimony-is-borne by
all The Nation of the Jews,
Was solemnly warned by a holy angel to summon
thee to himself into his house, and to hear
words from thee.
23 Then he invited them in, and offered them
hospitality.

These are men whom Peter has formerly regarded as 'Niggers.' Acting on the message, he goes so far as to receive them into the house, where he is himself the guest-of-honour. But, probably, he does not eat with them.

AT THE HOUSE OF CORNELIUS

On the morrow, he arose and went forth with them, and some [there were six] of the brethren [High-Jews] from Joppa went with him.

24 And on the morrow (after) they entered into Cæsarea,

And one of the servants announced that he was coming.

Each journey took about a day and a half.

And Cornelius was waiting for them,

Having called together his kinsmen, and relations.

Luke wishes to emphasise the fact that the whole company were Gentiles, though they were not all heathen. Some of them, at least, prayed to JHVH. It must have been at once evident to Peter that the matter does not concern one man only.

25 And it came to pass that as Peter entered,

Cornelius met him [in the porch],[1]

The distance over which a host advances to meet his guest is a matter of great importance in the East.

And falling at his feet, did obeisance to him.

There is no idea of worshipping Peter as a divinity.

26 But Peter raised him, saying,

Stand up ; I myself also am human.

The SPIRIT-message is working. A short time ago, Peter would have received this as the proper homage due from an inferior.

27 And conversing with him (as an equal) he went in [to the Men's Hall] [1] ;

Cornelius had evidently met Peter at the door. A most pronounced token of respect ; showing the position which

[1] See sketch, p. 297.

Peter occupied in Palestine as the Rabban of the High-Jews.

Peter little thinks that in a short time he will be regarded as an ' escaped convict.'

And he finds many who had come together.

28 And he said to them

PETER'S EXPLANATION

Ye yourselves know well how it is not customary

Peter avoids all reference to " The Law." He will not say un-law-ful.

For a Jew to (glue-himself, or) put-himself-on-a-level-with [1]

Or (even) to associate with (visit) a foreigner ;

And to me GOD shewed that I should call no human being common or unclean ;

Peter in the course of his journey may have remembered The Lord's words recorded in S. Mark 7. 14–20. He certainly understood the message of THE SPIRIT that he was to make no distinction (verse 20) ; and he so interpreted the Vision.

29 Wherefore also I came without contradiction when I was summoned.

I ask then, for what intent did you summon me ?

REPLY OF CORNELIUS

30 And Cornelius said,

Four days ago [we English should call it three days ago], up to this hour,

I was praying-the-Ninth [keeping Nones at 3 p.m.] in my house,

[1] Cf. Acts 5. 13 (p. 98).

Cornelius would not be admitted to The Temple, or (probably) into a synagogue, being a Gentile.

And behold, a man stood before me in bright apparel,

This may have been Moses, not an angel.

31 And, saith he,
Cornelius, thy prayer was hearkened to,
And thine almsdeeds were given heed to,
Before GOD.

32 Send then to Joppa, and call away Simon, who is surnamed Peter [from his purposed visitation-course].
He is a guest at the house of Simon a tanner, by the sea-side.

God hears the prayers of heathen, imperfect though they are; and he waits for us to join Him in helping them forward towards Himself.

The Greek verbs seem to imply that Peter was called away from his purposed course of visitation.

Had this event happened two or three centuries later, we should have said that Peter left his diocese of Judæa, and went into the diocese of Cæsarea, by invitation.

33 Immediately then I sent to thee; and thou didst act nobly in coming.

We must not omit to notice that throughout this meeting Cornelius speaks to Peter as to one whom he regards as a superior. Such etiquette is of the utmost significance in the East.

Now then we all are present before GOD,
[As for a Service of Prayer],
To hear all things that have been commanded thee from THE LORD.

This is intended by Cornelius as no mere friendly visit. They are gathered together in the sight of JHVH.

PETER'S MESSAGE

34 And Peter opened his mouth,

The same expression is used of Philip (Acts **8.** 35).[1] This is to be a solemn pronouncement.

And said,
In Truth, I am discovering that GOD *is not a*
35 *respecter-of-persons ;* but in every race he who
feareth Him and worketh righteousness is
acceptable to Him.

This is as great a revolution in Peter's life-long conceptions of GOD, as was wrought in Saul of Tarsus.

36 *He sent The Word to the Sons of Israel, preaching-the-good-news of peace* through Joshua Messiah,
He is LORD of all (men).

This is as much as Luke may say in those hostile times. But it implies Peter's recognition of JESUS as GOD.

37 Ye know the Word Which Was ;
(Coming) down to all Judæa.
(The) Beginning (Word) from Galilee ;
After the Baptism which John heralded,
38 JESUS,
Him from Nazareth.
(Ye know) how GOD Christed (anointed)
Him with HOLY SPIRIT and Power.
He went about doing good and healing all who are being kept in subjection by the devil,
Because GOD was with Him.

[1] Cf. Judg. **11.** 35 ; Job **3.** 1 ; **33.** 2 ; Ezek. **3.** 2 ; **24.** 27 ; **29.** 21 ; **33.** 22.

Luke is, as usual, giving a **summary** of Peter's sermon. A portion of it is cryptic, for believers only. In the verses 36, 37, 38 he tells, in most carefully veiled words, how Peter revealed to men whom up to now he would not willingly have touched (for fear of ceremonial defilement), the closely guarded secret of " the saints." We can have little doubt that this congregation in the house of Cornelius was the first-fruits of the work of Philip in Cæsarea. But Philip had learned his lesson, and did not proceed at once to baptise his converts, until The Lord's own accredited Testimony-Bearer came, under the guidance of THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The secret was never written in such a way that it could be understood by any hostile reader, until S. John proclaimed it, shortly before his death.

S. Jno. 1. 1 In the beginning WAS THE WORD
And THE WORD WAS with GOD,
And THE WORD WAS GOD.
11 He came unto " His Own " (in Galilee and Judæa).
12 Whosoever received Him,
He gave to them authority to become Children of GOD.
15 John bears Testimony concerning Him.
THE COMING ONE after me, has become before me,
For HE was FIRST in regard of me.
18 GOD ONLY-BEGOTTEN.

The last of The Twelve was then (about A.D. 90) evidently nearing the end of his life ; and it was necessary that the message of The Mystery should be handed on authoritatively to those who should follow.

Even then it was not so clearly stated as to prevent Arius mis-reading it. Then GOD raised up Athanasius ;

at the time when The Church was too firmly established for any Diocletian, or other persecution, to wipe it out of existence.

We find here also the first allusion to the Secret word Catholic. Secret, that is to say, in its use in the Society ; for it is a common Greek word, meaning ' general.' But as the Gospel came *down* to the whole world, this was expressed in the Greek words :

Kath' olou kosmou
Down-to whole world.

Writing the words thus—Kath' ol[ou] k[osmou] we see how by omitting the letters in brackets we get Katholik.[1] But in these earliest days, had such a phrase been spoken or written, *with this meaning*, it would have at once enraged a Jew to fury ; for to him it would mean a Gospel-to-niggers.

The nearest approach to a hint which Luke can give, is in the phrase *Kath' oles tes Ioudæas*, which means " down to all Judæa." (See also **9.** 31.)

10. 39 And we (are) witnesses of all things which He did both in the Region of the Judæans and in Jerusalem.
Him they also lifted up, *having hung Him on a tree*.[2]

We may notice incidentally, how here Luke confirms S. John's account of Our Lord's Earthly Ministry in Judæa. The Gospels of S. Matthew, S. Mark, and S. Luke, tell the story of the Galilean ministry. S. John supplements this with his accounts of what The Lord said and did in Judæa, where the opposition to Him was much more fierce.

[1] This must not be taken as a derivation of the ancient Greek adjective.

[2] Cf. Acts 5. 30 ; Gal. 3. 13 ; Deut. 21. 23 ; S. John 3. 14, 15.

10. 40 This Man GOD raised on the third day,
And gave Him to become manifest (GOD manifest in flesh),
41 Not to all The Nation,
But to Testimony-Bearers who had been appointed-from-above by GOD,
To us,
Who were eating and drinking with Him
[In the Blessed Sacrament]
After He rose from (the) dead.
(Compare S. Luke **24.** 30.)

Note that the word used for " rise " here, is the same as that used for " rising from sleep."

Sleep has been well called the twin-brother of death.

What we call earthly death is just passing through the surface which marks the division between the 'waters' of earth and the free-blowing 'air' of the Paradise-Garden-of-God. (Cf. S. John **3.** 8.)

42 And He gave us orders to proclaim-as-heralds to The Nation, and to give Testimony that This Man is
He-Who-Hath-Been-Ordained by GOD,
As Judge (Ruler) of living and dead.
43 To Him all the Prophets are bearing Testimony,
That every one believing into Him received remission of sins through His NAME.

OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

44 While Peter was still speaking these words,
THE HOLY SPIRIT fell upon all who were hearing The Word.
45 And the believers-of-the-circumcision [1]

[1] See p. 35.

Were astounded ; as many as came with Peter (from Joppa),

(Philip, if present, would not be astounded.)

Because that upon the Gentiles the free-gift of THE HOLY SPIRIT has been poured out.

46 For they were hearing them speaking with tongues, and glorifying GOD.

GOD declares that in His Sight no men are ' niggers.'
HE Who poured Himself on The Twelve at Jerusalem
Now pours Himself on
The Gentile Congregation at Cæsarea.

46 Then answered Peter,

47 Can any one forbid The Water, (or forbid) that these should be baptised,

Who received THE HOLY SPIRIT as we also did ?

48 And he gave orders that in (not into) the Name of THE LORD, they should be baptised.

These Gentile converts had been received into " The Family " by GOD Himself. Hence they were baptised in The NAME, not into it, as others would be later. (Cf. Acts **19.** 5 ; S. Matt. **28.** 19.)

Then they asked him to remain some days.

Peter was never lacking in courage.

But during those days it would ' give-him-furiously-to-think ' what was likely to happen to him when he returned to Jerusalem, to face the charge of preaching a Gospel-to-Niggers.

THE HIGH-JEWS HEAR

11. 1 And the Apostles and the brethren who happen to be of-the-region-of Judæa heard that the Gentiles also received THE WORD OF GOD.

News (which travels quickly in the East) of the Service at Cæsarea reached the ears of James, The Lord's brother, and of the sons of Zebedee, and was soon disseminated among " the brethren " in their secret conclaves throughout Judæa.

There is no reason to suppose that the secret leaked out at present to outsiders. Every High-Jew knows well that similar rioting to that aroused by Stephen and Saul will follow, if " the people " hear of this preaching of a Gospel-to-Niggers. The fear of death-by-stoning will keep the mouths of High-Jews closed. It is fairly evident from Luke's account that the other Apostles are evangelising elsewhere than in Judæa.

PETER'S RETURN

2 And when Peter came up to Jerusalem,
They-of-the-circumcision (Judaisers) were disputing against him,
3 Saying that
Thou didst go unto men having uncircumcision,
And didst eat with them.

Here is the point at which there comes the division in The Church, (though not among the Apostles,) into three parties :

Stephenites, looking to Paul as their head,
High-Jews, looking to Peter as their head,
Judaisers, looking to James as their head.

(Compare 1 Cor. 1. 12.)

The three names above are the terms we use here for the parties. They never came into actual use.

Further, the three Apostles named never differed as regards " The Faith " ; though they used different methods of spreading it. (See Gal. 1. 6–12.)

The Editor has little doubt that the " eating " spoken of means " eating THE WORD," in the Christian meal-rite.[1]

No High-Jew will object to heathen being admitted as " brethren," provided that they are first admitted into " The Family " by circumcision.

These discussions appear, from the Bezan Text, to have occurred at various places, as Peter continued his visitation-journey round about to Jerusalem; and to have culminated there.

4 But Peter began from the beginning,
And was setting out (the matter) to them in order,
Saying,
5 I was staying in the city of Joppa
Holding prayer-meetings,
And I saw in trance a Vision,
A certain descending vessel, like a great main-sail with four corners, being let down from the sky, and it came quite up to me.
6 And I looked intently at it, and was observing it;
And I saw the quadrupeds of the earth, and the wild-beasts, and the reptiles, and the fowls of the heaven (sky).
7 And I also heard a Voice telling me
Rise, Peter, sacrifice! and eat!
8 But I said, By no means! Lord.
Because (that which is) common or unclean never entered into my mouth.
9 But a Voice answered a second time from the heaven (sky),
What GOD made clean, do not thou make common.
10 And this happened a third time, and everything was drawn up again into the sky (heaven).
11 And, behold, at that very time three men stopped

[1] Cf. p. 263.

at the house in which we were, sent from
Cæsarea to me.
12 And THE SPIRIT told me to go with them, no
distinction made.
And these six brethren also came with me, and
we entered into the house of the man.
13 And he announced to us how he saw the messenger
(angel) in his house, standing and saying to
him
Send to Joppa, and summon Simon, who is
surnamed Peter,
14 Who will speak words to thee, in which thou shalt
be saved,
Thou and all thy house.
15 And as I began to speak,
THE HOLY SPIRIT fell upon them,
Just as on us also at (the) beginning.
16 And I was reminded of The Lord's Word,
How he said,
John indeed baptised with water,
But ye shall be baptised in HOLY SPIRIT.
17 If then, the like free-gift GOD gave to them, as
also to us, who believed upon the Lord Joshua
Messiah, was I one to be strong to hinder GOD ?
18 And having heard these things, they were silent,
And they glorified GOD, saying,
Then certainly to the Gentiles also,
GOD gave the repentance unto life.

We might suppose that for these Jewish believers then present, this settles the whole matter of a Gospel-to-Niggers. But we must note Luke's tense here, as always. They do not say GOD has given (or, is giving) to the Gentiles, etc.; but GOD *gave* (on this occasion) the repentance unto Life to *these* Gentiles.

The fight over this Gospel-to-Niggers has hardly more than commenced yet. Some uncircumcised Gentiles have been admitted. But that does not imply that in future all are to be received without coming under the requirements of The Law.

As we look back to these Elder Brethren of ours, nineteen hundred years ago, we wonder how some of them could have been so blind.

When we view the divisions in the Church sixteen hundred or four hundred years ago, we marvel how the Brethren of those days could have fought so bitterly over some points which to-day seem to us of small importance.

Now that we are living in the twentieth century, perspective makes everything near to us look very large, and often it shuts out the view of " The Distant Hills." [1]

Those who have ears to hear, will hear.

[1] " Sacred Allegories," Adams.

CHAPTER W (A.D. 36–42)

CHRISTIANS

ONCE more we have to go backwards along the stream of history, that we may follow another rill to its source; and so "trace the course of all things accurately from the first, in order."

STEPHEN STILL SPEAKING

11. 19 Those then who were dispersed-in-various-directions from the persecution which happened upon-the-matter-of Stephen
Passed-through as far as Phœnicia and Cyprus and Antioch;
Speaking The Word to no one except to Judæans only.

The Hellenists had proved so very hostile.

20 But there were some of them,
Cyprian and Cyrenian men,
Who when they came to Antioch were speaking (also) to the Hellenists,
Preaching-the-good-news-of The Lord Joshua.
21 And a *Hand of the Lord was with them;*
And great was the number who believed and turned about (converted) unto The Lord.
22 And the report was heard into the ears of
The-Church-which-is-in-Jerusalem,
Concerning them.

STREAMS OF BLOOD

From that pool of blood in which the body of Stephen lay, there trickled streamlets, at first unseen, and then becoming rills and rivulets.

We have traced one on its way to Damascus, and the Garden-of-Delight, and seen it disappear underground for a short time at Jerusalem.

Another meandered by Samaria, Gaza, Azotus, and Cæsarea, and was recognised at Jerusalem as the Gospel-to-Niggers, or the Catholic Gospel.

Now we follow another, starting from the L— C— A— Synagogue, through Phœnicia, and dividing into two heads towards Cyprus and Antioch.

At first the only drops which it gathers are Judæans, but at last some Hellenists gravitate into it.

CONVERT YOUR OWN PEOPLE, AND THEN GO TO HEATHEN !

Why was it so hard to convert Hellenists to a Gospel-to-Niggers ?

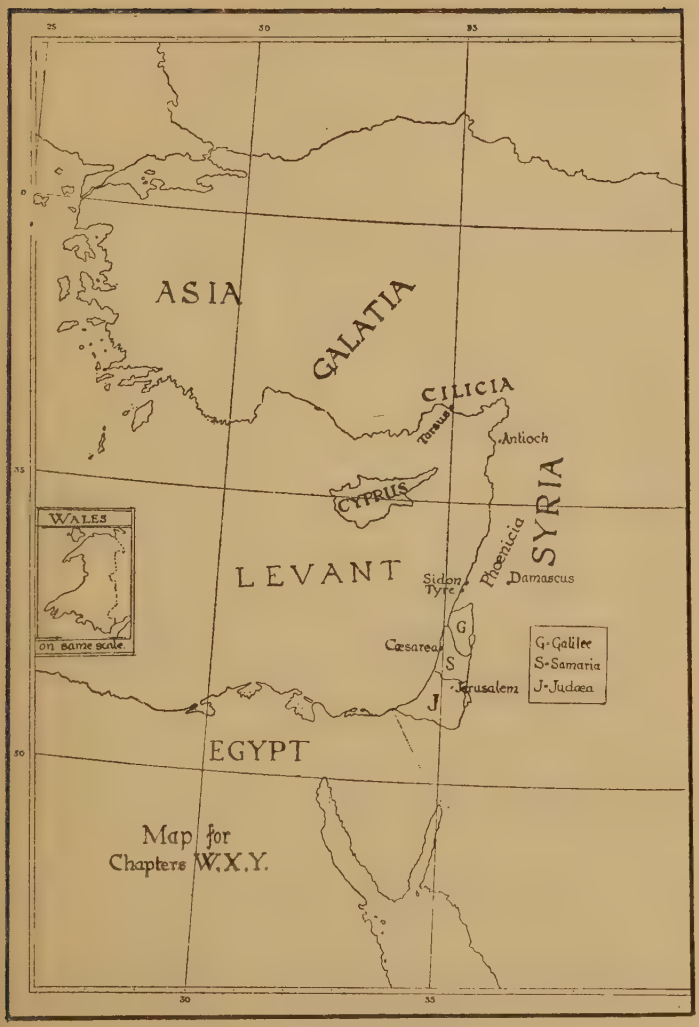
Galileans were the easiest to persuade, because all their lives they constantly came in contact with men of other nations.[1] So much so that their Region was called *Galilee-of-the-nations*.[2]

Nazareth was so polluted (!) with the presence of these travelling heathen that there was a well-known proverb, " Can any good thing come out of Nazareth ? " [3]

Furthermore, it was the more respectable class of Gentile merchants with whom Galileans came into contact there.

Low-Jews of Judæa full of zeal for the glory of The Temple, of which Isaiah said, " *Mine house shall be*

[1] See p. 34. [2] Isa. 9. 1. [3] S. John 1. 46.



THE COASTS OF THE LEVANT.

called a house of prayer for all nations," [1] " compassed sea and land to make proselytes." [2]

Their proselytes were admitted only by circumcision and baptism, and a pledge to observe The Law.

But **Hellenists** lived in the midst of those heathen cities which were a very sink of iniquity, atheism, and all uncleanness. Greek and Roman writers such as Juvenal have given us a picture from the inside, which neither Jew nor Christian could have painted in more lurid colours.

To Hellenists, then, the mere thought of admitting those heathen whom they were compelled to meet in business, and to live amongst abroad, was absolutely unthinkable.

But so great is the power of The Gospel, that where Stephen and Saul failed, their successors began to succeed.

The news of this success soon reached Jerusalem. Barnabas was at once sent, as the one Hellenist quasi-Apostle in Jerusalem, to inspect and report upon the circumstances.

BARNABAS SENT TO ANTIOCH

22 And they apostled (sent forth) Barnabas as far as Antioch.

His commission from The Twelve was limited to Antioch.

Even Barnabas is not to be yet entrusted with a roving mission, as Apostle, to the world.

23 And he arrived, and saw the grace, which was GOD's grace, and rejoiced.
And he was exhorting all,
The Apostles had called him Son of Exhortation.[3]
With steadfastness of heart
To wait for The Lord.

[1] Isa. 56. 7. [2] S. Matt. 23. 15. [3] Acts 4. 36.

24 Because he was a good man and full of
HOLY SPIRIT [enthusiasm] and of faith;
And a considerable number were added to THE LORD.

Barnabas saw that THE HOLY SPIRIT was working in Antioch. So after a course of sermons, in which the main theme was "*wait still upon God;*"[1] finding the work growing too great for his powers, he goes beyond his commission (?), and sets off to seek the man who had well-nigh laid down his life in his efforts to convince Hellenists; and whose heart would rejoice at the good news from Antioch.

25 And he went to Tarsus to search for Saul.

All these events will have taken some time. There was the time necessary for the preaching to Hellenists to take effect;

News of its success to reach Jerusalem more than three hundred miles away;

The three-hundred-mile journey of Barnabas to Antioch; some weeks of enthusiastic work there; a journey of over one hundred and twenty miles to Tarsus, a search for Saul by patient enquiry through Syria-and-Cilicia, where he was working (Cilicia is as big as Ireland), and the return journey to Antioch.

The journey of Barnabas from Jerusalem and until he and Saul arrived at Antioch was not less than six hundred miles on foot.

IT HAPPENED

26 And he found him and brought him to Antioch.
And it happened to them also
That they were united together for a whole year
in The Church,
And that they taught a considerable number of
people.

[1] Pss. 27. 14; 37. 34; 62. 5; etc.

It happened !

Sometimes a sparrow **happens** to fall to the ground.

The life of God is in that sparrow !

For God is Life, and all life is in THE WORD, and His Words are SPIRIT and are LIFE.[1]

Life, light, and love, are GOD in us. (1 John.)

The two who " happened " to meet, when Saul reported himself to Peter at Jerusalem, " happened " to work for a year together in Antioch, and " happened " to go on the First Missionary Journey, two together, into the " Galilee " of The-Nations-of-the-World.

The Lord sent them two and two before His face into every city and place, whither He Himself was about to come.[2]

CHRISTIANS FIRST AT ANTIOCH

26 And in Antioch first, the disciples received the name—Christians.

The Church has been baptised in blood, and now receives its full name.

The	Holy, Catholic, Apostolic, Christian, Church.
Holy	THE HOLY SPIRIT has come upon and into it.
Catholic	The message has come down-to-all-the-world.
Apostolic	The Apostles are the authorised messengers.
Christian	The world calls its message Messianic.
Church.	GOD has " *called them out* " [3] of the world, that :

They may be ' in the world,' yet ' not of the world,'

So that they may ' save the world.'

The name Christian was given in scorn because they talked about Joshua the Nazoræan as The Christ.

So in scorn Pilate proclaimed Him,—King.

It " happened " so !

[1] S. John 1. 4 ; 6. 63. [2] S. Luke 10. 1.

[3] Ecclesia (in English, Church) means ' called out.'

CHAPTER X

THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH IS ONE (A.D. 42)

SECOND VISIT TO JERUSALEM

THE Editor paints his next picture with the colour 'Probability.'

The streams which started from that high ground at Jerusalem, close to the "*Garden-of-Paradise, at the Gate of Heaven*,"[1] met somewhere and at some time, and flowed on as One Catholic River.

Do we find the place and time in St. Paul's letter to the Galatians?

Gal. I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas,
2. 1 Taking-with-me-by-deliberate-intent, Titus also.

Titus was a Gentile, uncircumcised, whom we have supposed to be Saul's personal attendant, employed by him since the days that he lived in Tarsus.

2 And I went up on account of a Revelation.

S. Paul does not say "a revelation to me." It is quite possible that it might have been the Revelation to Peter at Cæsarea. We may be assured that tidings of such a complete revolution of religious-outlook as was recorded in Acts **11.** 18, would be transmitted to the quasi-Apostle Barnabas at Antioch, and by him to Saul. Saul the Gentleman (by which we mean an Aristocrat of high

[1] Gen. 28. 17.

lineage in whom love of money has not produced loss of breeding) does not say merely, " At last these Galilean peasants have come round to my way of thinking." These Galilean fishermen are to him Apostles-of-repute, who received His Master's Message before he did. Whatever be the social position they used to hold formerly, that is of no account to the man who burned up everything of that sort as " lumber " on the Altar of His Lord.[1]

But in *The Church* these are the men " who count for something," even if they speak with an uncouth Galilean accent.

Knowing Saul as we do, can we imagine him *not* going up to Jerusalem as soon as he hears the news ?

AN OFFERING

2 And I offered-up-as-a-votive-gift
The Gospel which I am preaching (still) among the nations,
But as something-which-was-my-own-private-(sacrifice) [2]
(Offered) to those who counted ;
If by any chance I am running (now),
Or was running (then),
Towards fruitlessness.

He tells the Corinthians at a later date (1 Cor. 9. 20–27) that ' he runs in no secret fashion ; he fights, not as one who only practices aiming blows at empty air ; he beats with blows every natural impulse of the carnally-minded man, and enslaves such impulses. He lays aside every conceit and every sin which would encircle him round ; and seeing the cloud of witnesses hovering above the shores of the Lake-of-earthly-Generation, he

[1] See p. 222.

[2] *κατ' ἰδίαν θυσίαν.*

runs the purposed contest with eyes set solely on JESUS, in Whom his faith began, and in Whom it will end.'

If this Gospel, which he believes has been entrusted to him, and into which he has baptised his uncircumcised body-servant Titus, proves to be a course towards fruitlessness, he will burn that up too as an offering to GOD, and commence his course anew.

3 But Titus who was with me, Greek though he was, was not compelled to be circumcised,

before he was admitted to The Sacred Meal, or, The Brethren's Mess.

OPPOSITION

There was evidently an attempt made by some to enforce this circumcision,

4 Through certain false-brethren introduced-secretly;
Who came-in-under-false-pretences to spy out the liberty which we have in Messiah Joshua.

Saul would have submitted to the divinely-appointed Apostles, but to such false brethren

5 He did not yield by subordination for even an hour.

6 But from those who were of real account—[1]
(Whatever class they used to belong to previously matters nothing to me);
GOD does not accept any man's face [social rank];
To me, I say, those-who-counted contributed nothing additional.

7 But on the contrary,
Seeing that the Gospel of uncircumcision [the Gospel-to-Niggers] had been entrusted to me,
Just as Peter (received that) of the Circumcision.

[1] Anacoluthon. (Break in the grammar.)

BUILDING OF DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE TEMPLE OF GOD

9 James, and Cephas (Peter), and John,
Who were accounted the pillars (of The Church),
Gave the right hand of fellowship to me and Barnabas,
[Accepted us both as Co-Apostles] ;
That we to the nations,
And they to the Circumcision (should go).

It is natural that the free-born-Roman-Citizen should take an imperial view. The men who a few years ago were fishermen, at present can hardly see more than a provincial view. Further, for them to proceed on a course which would (apparently) destroy the religion in which they have been brought up is very difficult indeed. Saul has been publicly rejected by The Nation, and now burns his boats behind him.

FIVE POINTS

But, for all that, the indwelling Power of THE HOLY SPIRIT maintains between them the right-hand of brotherhood and fellowship. Throughout the dangers and difficulties which lie ahead, their feet will travel in support of one another ; the fervent prayers of these righteous men will avail much ; Paul will stir up his converts everywhere to relieve the necessities of the poor saints at Jerusalem ; and he will preserve the honour of The Twelve even more carefully than his own.

THE HONOUR OF THE BRETHREN

In no way is this more clearly shown than in that account of Peter's Vision and of his visit to Cæsarea ; which is prolix almost to the point of tediousness. The

section **10.** 1. to **11.** 17 is totally unlike anything else in Luke's Book. He repeats his words again and again.

Both Paul and Luke intend to make it absolutely clear that the **revelation** of the Gospel-to-the-nations was given to Peter.

And in St. Paul's own account of it, in his Epistle to the Galatians, he avoids giving any possibility for a suggestion that he went to Jerusalem in order to persuade The Twelve to accept this Gospel-to-the-Gentiles from him, on his own authority.

And yet Saul still drinks another draught of The Master's Cup ; as some of his own Nation endeavour to cast him out from the Circle-of-the-Apostles.

We omitted verse 8 above.–

But now we must record it.

> 8 For he who energised Peter unto apostolate of the Circumcision,
> Energised me too unto the nations.

Saul expressly mentions Peter's apostleship, but he is silent about his own.

The Cup tastes very bitter to the flesh, but it brings the very Sweetness of the Son of God to the spirit.[1]

A FATAL (?) OBJECTION

But throughout this present Chapter X, the reader's keen eye has not failed to observe the omission, at the outset, of those three words " fourteen years after."

Our chronology is hopelessly at fault !

And yet, is it hopeless ?

Once in this letter, and once only, Tychicus will tamper with the (Greek) text.

[1] Ezek. 2. 9 to 3. 3 ; Rev. 10. 9–11.

NUMERATION

Before the Arabs invented for us those most convenient things we call Arabic numerals, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc., writers had to make use of letters. Using our own English Alphabet by way of illustration, it was something like this :

A = 1	& = 6	J = 20
B = 2	F = 7	K = 30
C = 3	G = 8	L = 40
D = 4	H = 9	M = 50
E = 5	I = 10	and so on.

Now S. Paul, in his laborious and painful writing of that Letter to the Galatians of Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium, would, we feel sure, prefer to write ID (= 14) rather than FOURTEEN.

But we shall suggest that probably he wrote AFTERD-YEARS. (Again we use English letters by way of illustration.) Remember, there were no spaces between words, such as we make to-day.

In Greek letters it would appear thus—

ΔΙΑΔΕΤΩΝ = after 4 years.

Now, let us suppose that the amanuensis who copied this (or a later copyist led astray by a recollection of 2 Cor. **12.** 2), wrote it thus—ΔΙΑΙΔΕΤΩΝ.

You hardly notice the difference at first ; but this is AFTERIDYEARS = after 14 years.

Or, there may have been an accidental mark on the parchment where that extra I comes in.

Or again, as we look at the similarity of these first four (or five) characters, we see how easily an I might slip in by accidental mistake.

When in later copies the ID (14) was written as FOURTEEN, the mistake would become fixed.

Using English letters and words, we may thus indicate the two readings, in the original MS,

THENAFTERDYEARSIWENTUP . . . and—THENA FTERIDYEARSIWENTUP . . .

When we further remember that 4 years according to ancient reckoning means the same thing as 3 years in ours, we shall see that the chronology will come out something like this :

Saul's conversion	Year 1 of Saul's new life.
In Arabia	,, 2 ,, ,,
Preaching in Damascus	,, 3 ,, ,,
First Visit to Peter	,, 3 ,, ,,
In Syria-and-Cilicia	,, 3, 4 ,, ,,
Barnabas' Journey to Tarsus ..	,, 5 ,, ,,
Work together in Damascus ..	,, 5, 6 ,, ,,
Peter's Vision	,, 6 ,, ,,
Saul goes with Titus to Jerusalem	,, 6 ,, ,,

This reading (D for ID) is suggested by Principal A. J. Grieve, in *Peake's Commentary on the Bible.*

Tychicus read the suggestion twice, and passed it over as unimportant. The third time he saw that Principal Grieve had found a solution of a problem which has vexed the souls of scholars for centuries.

REMEMBER THE POOR

Gal. 2. 10 Only (they asked) that we would remember the poor,
Which also I hastened to do this very thing.

The problem of the " poor saints " at Jerusalem and in Judæa was always urgent.[1]

[1] We hear of it in Acts 2. 45; 4. 35; 11. 29; 12. 25; 24. 17; Rom. 15. 25; 1 Cor. 16. 3; 2 Cor. 8., 9.

AGABUS (A.D. 43)

The opportunity soon occurs. About the years A.D. 41–46 there was a great shortage of grain throughout the Roman Empire; and famines occurred in various parts. A certain wise preacher named Agabus, who was a far-seeing man, arrived in Antioch, and fore-told that the mountainous country of Judæa, which was probably supporting a larger population than its own resources could supply, would suffer severely in consequence.

His forebodings were justified, and Josephus tells us that the famine was very severe in that year when (first) Cuspius Fadus, and (then) Tiberius Alexander were procurators, *i.e.* A.D. 46.

The Bezan Manuscript says that Agabus journeyed to Antioch with Saul on his return from Jerusalem.

Acts 11. 27 And in these days there came down from Jerusalem prophets (preachers) to Antioch.

28 And one of them, named Agabus, stood up (in the assembly)
And shewed-by-a-sign through THE SPIRIT
That there is about to come great famine upon all-the-world.

That is, throughout the Roman Empire.

The words of the Bezan text here,

When **we** were assembled together, one from among them spoke, by name Agabus,

seem to imply that Luke's conversion may have been in Antioch, and not in Troas, as suggested on p. 5.

And this happened in the time of Claudius.

Claudius reigned A.D. 41–54.

29 And of the disciples,
Each one according to his means,

Set apart some of his effects for deaconing
(ministering),
To send to the brethren living in Judæa.
30 This they did,
And sent it to the presbyters
By the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

THE RELIEF EXPEDITION

As Sir William Ramsay has pointed out, it would have been quite useless to send money to people, when there was no food for them to purchase.

The money had first to be collected. And as few, probably, of the Christians were rich folk, they would have to save up week by week from their own store.[1] Corn and other non-perishable commodities would be bought and stored, until the time came that the actual famine appeared to be approaching in Judæa. Then a large caravan-transport would be organised to carry the food from Antioch over some three hundred miles or more, and the supplies would be distributed throughout Judæa according to the numbers of the believers in each town and village.

We can hardly allow a shorter time for the whole collection and relief-expedition and distribution than two to three years. Say A.D. 43–45.

It is important to notice that the supplies were sent to the (Christian) presbyters in Judæa, not Jerusalem. Queen Helena, as Josephus tells us, undertook a great relief expedition to Jerusalem. The supplies were sent to *the presbyters* because, as we shall see, by the time that Barnabas and Saul arrived, James the son of Zebedee was dead, Peter had fled to Antioch (?), and (not improbably) John was living in close retirement with The

[1] 1 Cor. 16. 2.

Blessed Virgin,[1] who had been entrusted to his care by Her Son.

Now, S. Paul expressly tells us in Gal. 1. 22, that he was not known by sight to the Churches in Judæa, though he was well-known in Jerusalem. He could therefore go in person to make this distribution with Barnabas, practically incognito. Hence there would be no fear of trouble arising through the Judaisers.

Barnabas was the head of the expedition, and Saul his helper, and no suspicion of 'heresy' had as yet fallen upon the former. The name Saul was far too common in Judæa, and among Jews generally, for any one at once to connect it with Saul of Tarsus.

MAMMON

Thus, that Mammon which is so often a fruitful source of unrighteousness is being used in the Christian Church to promote a feeling of unity and friendship.

People sometimes wrongly quote "Money is the root of all evil." The *love* of money breeds ills of every kind. But money treated as a stewardship is capable of bringing untold good.

Saul both now and throughout the remainder of his life used it to try and overcome that stake-in-his-flesh, the hatred towards himself shown by his own Nation.

The right use of money has revealed:

THE ONE, HOLY, CATHOLIC, APOSTOLIC, CHRISTIAN CHURCH.[2]

[1] Hence it would be *nil ad rem* to mention this visit in Gal. 1. and 2.

[2] Cf. pp. 55, 101, 270, 282.

CHAPTER Y (A.D. 44–46)

HEROD AGRIPPA

POPULAR ACTS

12. 1 During that time,
Herod the king cast (his) hands upon some of those who were of The Church to injure (them).
2 And he took away James the brother of John with a dagger (or, short sword).

Luke seems to imply that this was an assassination, rather than an execution.

3 And seeing that it is acceptable to the Judæans,
He added [1] to arrest Peter also.
This was a judicial act.
(The time) was the Days of Unleavened Bread.

That is, the anniversary of the time of The Crucifixion. As we should say, just about Easter. Probably A.D. 44. This Herod Agrippa was the grandson of the Herod who ordered the Massacre of the Innocents at Bethlehem. He was King over Judæa from A.D. 41–44. Josephus describes him of mild, gentle, and compassionate temper. He was very desirous of conciliating his Judæan subjects. Probably by this time the facts about Peter's conversion to the Gospel-to-Niggers were beginning to leak out; and Herod Agrippa, after having brought about the

[1] An Aramaism.

assassination of James ; finding that the act was popular, proceeded to arrest the High-Jew Rabban Peter and imprison him, on the anniversary of His Master's Crucifixion fifteen years before. Peter and John may now be styled Christians, as we to-day understand the title. The only High-Jew leader remaining is James the Brother of The Lord. It is not improbable that he wrote his Epistle about this time, addressing it to Hellenists.

On account of the sanctity of his life, James was held in high respect by the citizens of Jerusalem, and was styled by them " The Just." The High-Priest, Ananas the younger, sentenced him to death-by-stoning about A.D. 62.

Herod would not pollute the eight-day Feast of Unleavened Bread by a public execution, so deferred Peter's trial until the Feast was over.

THE THIRTEEN

By the death of James Boanerges Bar-Zebedee a vacancy was made in the Circle-of-the-Twelve.

We hear of no formal filling of the vacancy, but shortly after, both Barnabas and Saul are apostled (sent forth) by the Church at Antioch.

This brings the officially and formally recognised number of Apostles to thirteen ; and it is remarkable to notice that although we always hear of the Twelve Tribes of Israel, the number of these tribes was always thirteen ; the Tribe of Levi being, as it were, of the Twelve, and yet outside ; and at the head, on account of their priestly position.

Since this time, S. Peter has always been regarded as head of The Twelve ; but S. Paul takes The Master's place. Had this, however, been suggested to him during his lifetime, he would have emphatically disclaimed

it. But the New Testament and the Christian Centuries reveal it clearly.

PETER'S ARREST

4 And he apprehended him (Peter) and put him into prison,
And handed him over to four quaternions (squads-of-four) of soldiers to guard him,
Intending after the Paschal Feast (Passover) to bring him up (out of prison)
To The Nation.

The four squads, of four men each, would keep Peter in continuous guard day and night. No opportunity was to be given for such escape from prison as was recorded in Acts **5.** 19. Peter was chained by the wrists to two of the guard, and the others kept watch at the inner and outer guard-places of the jail.

Herod intended to take no risks !

GUARDS VERSUS PRAYER

5 Peter then was-being-carefully-watched in the prison.
And prayer was-being-assiduously-maintained by The Church to GOD concerning him.
6 But when Herod was on the point of bringing him forth,
On that night Peter was lying asleep between two soldiers, having been fettered with two chains ;
And the guards before the doors were carefully-watching the prison.

AN ANGEL GUARD

7 And behold, a Lord's angel stood by,
And a light shone in the cell.

And he struck Peter's side, and roused him,
Saying, Stand up quickly !
And his chains fell off from his hands.
8 And the angel said to him,
Put on thy girdle, and bind on thy sandals.
And he did so.
And he said to him,
Throw thy himation [1] round thee, and follow me.
9 And he was going out, and following.
Also he was unaware that what was happening through the angel was real,
But was thinking that he was seeing a vision.
10 Having gone through first guard-place and second,
They came to the iron gate which leads into the city ;
Which was open for them automatically.
And they went down the seven steps,
And advanced one street,
And forthwith the angel departed from him.
11 And when Peter recovered himself, he said,
Now I know really that the Lord apostled (sent out) His angel,
And delivered me from Herod's hand,
And from the expectation of The Nation of the Jews.

"THE JEWS"

We notice the change of atmosphere.

Peter has passed from the close air of Judaism into the free air of THE SPIRIT.

Luke is now free to speak of "The Jews" in Jerusalem,[2] and Peter now begins to think of *his own nation* as "The Jews." He is now a Christian.

Draughts from The Master's Cup still are given to

[1] See p. 258. [2] See p. 27.

Peter, James, and John to drink. They have come to their own nation, and are rejected. With this thought in mind read again S. Mark **10.** 35–40, and see the gentle irony.

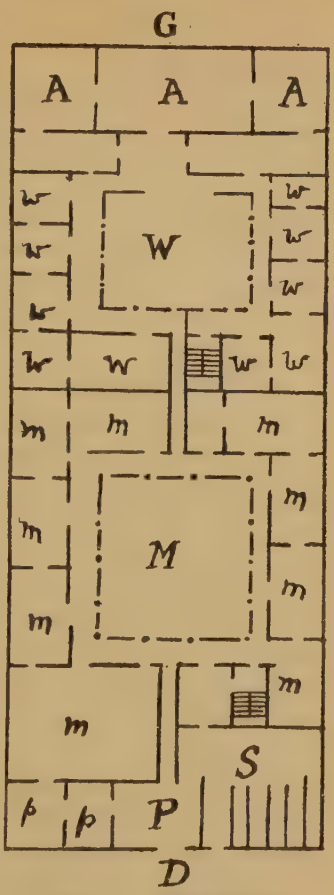
THE HOUSE OF MARY

12 And when he understood,
He went to the house of Mary the mother of John who is surnamed Mark,
Where there were a considerable number gathered together and offering prayers.

This Mary was the aunt of Barnabas. We gather that the house was a large one which had a porter's lodge with a gate-way or porch.

Usually over the entrance door (D) of such a house, there was lattice-work, so that the porter could hear the voice of a person outside, before opening the door.

It has been thought that



PLAN OF LARGE HOUSE.

A, Servants' working rooms; D, Entrance door; G, Garden entrance; M, Men's hall; m, Men's rooms; P, Porch; p, Porter's lodge; S, Stables; W, Women's hall; w, Women's rooms. (M and W were generally open to the sky in a one-story building.)

this was the house where Our Lord ate the Last Supper with His disciples, in a large room on the upper floor. In this room probably, some of the High-Jews had assembled for The Breaking of The Bread ever since that time. Of course it was necessary to hold the service in strict secrecy, otherwise the disciples would have been accused, as they often were later, of holding Thyestian banquets. A hint of this is given in S. Matt. **28.** 13–15. By the mode of death of Our Lord His Body was drained of every drop of blood.

RHODA THE SLAVE-GIRL

13 And when he knocked at the door of the porch,
A maid-servant came to answer-the-door, named Rhoda.
14 And recognising Peter's voice ;
For joy she did not open the porch,
But running in she announced that
Peter is standing before the porch.
15 But they said to her, Thou art mad.
But she was confidently-affirming that it is so.
Then they said, Perhaps, it is his angel.

We ought not to overlook the fact that, throughout the whole of this history, these people no more expected the miraculous to happen than we do to-day, even though they had seen miracles occur.

16 But Peter was going on knocking ;
And when they opened it they saw him, and were in amazement.

Peter would not keep on knocking in such a manner as to arouse the whole street from their slumbers in the middle of the night. No doubt certain knocks were given by the members of the society, say three in a special

rhythm. Peter gave these knocks again, when he heard sounds once more in the porch.

17 And he went in and made a sign with his hand for silence,

lest a chance passer-by might hear their exclamations of astonishment,

And he described-in-full to them how The Lord had brought him forth out of the prison.
Also he said,
Announce these things to James and to the brethren.
And he went out and journeyed to another place.

ANOTHER PLACE

Where was this place? Various guesses have been made, but we shall suggest Antioch. There he would be outside Herod's jurisdiction. But in A.D. 60 there would be no reason of that sort for not mentioning it. The reason of Luke's silence is probably this.

At Antioch, as we read in Gal. **2.** 11–14, Saul was compelled to administer a rebuke to the head of The Twelve. We in the twentieth century may see him taking the place on earth once occupied by The Master when He was in earthly-human flesh.[1]

S. Paul never hinted at the fact, and S. Luke will not attract attention to the rebuke.

INCONSISTENCY

Gal. When Peter came to Antioch,
2. 11 I resisted him to the face, because he stood self-condemned.
12 For before the coming of certain men from James,
He was eating with the Gentiles.

[1] Cf. Gal. **2.** 20.

But when they came,
He was shrinking back, and separating himself,
Fearing those of the circumcision.

Do we feel a little surprised at Peter's inconsistency? Let us sit in the Niggers' dining-car, with our friends looking on, and see how it feels! It is not only Jews who find it difficult to get over their prejudices against eating and drinking and praying with Niggers.

THREE OCCASIONS

To mention Antioch in this history might recall that event to mind; and St. Paul only alluded to it in the one case that he was compelled to do so. In that Letter to the Galatians he had to point out that the only occasions when he met The Apostles before beginning his ministry to the Gentile World, there was no opportunity for a course of instruction by The Twelve.

On the first occasion he was with Peter for a fortnight, and saw no other leader except James.

On the second occasion, three years later, he received from Peter, James, and John, a confirmation of his action in admitting a Gentile to full Christian privileges without previous circumcision.

On that occasion Peter announced the revelation of the same message which had been given to Saul.

On the third occasion that he met Peter he was forced to take up a position of superiority.

After that, he was sent out by The Church at Antioch to his missionary work to the nations.

DISPERSION OF THE TWELVE

Only Peter, James, and John appear to have been living in Jerusalem during the period A.D. 35–45 or thereabouts. James has now been killed, and John is

probably living in close retirement with The Blessed Mother, since the days of danger began. After her death, which was probably just before A.D. 58, (when S. Luke could at last write the story of The Incarnation,) S. John probably went to work in the Province of Asia.

Tradition tells us that the other nine Apostles had all left Palestine by about twelve years after the Resurrection ; *i.e.* by A.D. 41. This was the date of Herod Agrippa's receiving the Kingship over Judæa, Samaria, and Cæsarea, in addition to the Kingship over Galilee and the Hauran.

These latter had formerly been under the jurisdiction of that Herod Philip, to whom Our Lord was sent at the time of His Trial by Pilate, and Herod Agrippa had held them since A.D. 38.[1]

WHERE ARE THE NINE ?

It is not unlikely that those nine Apostles had been practically driven out by him.

Whither had they gone ?

We of this century should much like to know. But so would many others in A.D. 60. Had we been living then, we should have known why.

The hunting of Christian-wild-beasts had already begun.

Many Roman ' sportsmen ' would have liked to know where they could get ' big-game-shooting.' The lions had their coverts where they were secretly rearing their cubs ; and many must have been the attempts to get the cubs to betray the hiding-places of their Fathers-in-God.

But I have little doubt that Theophilus knew when he got Luke's Second Volume.

[1] Josephus, *Antiq.* **19. 8. 2.**

They were working in :

Parthia,	Province of Asia,
Media,	Phrygia and Pamphylia,
Elam,	Egypt,
Mesopotamia,	Libya-about-Cyrene,
Judæa,	Rome,
Cappadocia,	Crete,
Pontus,	Arabia. (Acts 2. 9–11.)

See Map, facing p. 133.

How that " Judæa " has bothered us, when reading Acts 2.!

Also " Jews and Proselytes."

Both are intended to throw pursuers off the scent. James the Lord's Brother was still in Judæa. John was probably in Asia, Paul was in Rome, and Barnabas may have been working in Phrygia and Pamphylia.

JESUS went before them into " *the Galilee of the nations*."

There they saw Him, by faith ; as well as in Galilee by open vision.

When the Church **seemed** strong it was coming short of its ideal. When it was weak, THE HOLY SPIRIT worked. " When I am weak, then am I strong." [1] " Yet not I." [2]

This is often true now for the individual.

UNPOPULARITY

12. 18 But when the day broke,
There was no small trouble in the soldiers' (minds),
what was become of Peter.
19 And Herod sought for him in vain ;
And not finding him,
Closely examined the guards,
And commanded that they should be led away to death. [As Roman law demanded.]

[1] 2 Cor. 12. 10. [2] Gal. 2. 20.

And he went down from Judæa to Cæsarea,
And was dwelling there.

Herod probably found a change of air desirable. He wanted to be popular with his subjects. Those who desired Peter's death felt that they had been fooled. The others hated him for his attempt to kill their Rabbi. So his action had made him unpopular with all; for of course " The Jews " did not believe that any " miracle " had happened. They put it down to Herod's connivance.

TYRE AND SIDON

20 Now Herod was furiously angry,
[Almost to the point of war],
With Tyrians and Sidonians.

This was on account of a slight which was put upon him by Marcus the Roman Governor of Syria. The affair happened through a misapprehension, about A.D. 41, three years before the time at which our story has arrived. Luke as usual traces the course of events from their beginning.

When the shortage of corn throughout the Empire began to be felt, the merchants of Tyre and Sidon wanted to ship grain from the fertile plains of Galilee, which were part of Herod's Kingdom, to Rome and, among other places, to Antioch.[1]

And with one accord they were coming to him. And they persuaded (bribed) Blastus, who was over the King's bed-chamber [and had his ear], and were begging for peace, on account of the supplying of their Region from the King's country.

[1] Cf. p. 291; and Map, p. 279.

THE VOICE OF A GOD

At Cæsarea, Herod was informed that a festival was to be celebrated to make vows for his safety. The embassy from Tyre and Sidon was probably presented on this occasion. On the second day of the festival he put on a garment wholly of silver, and of a texture truly wonderful. And the silver of his garment being illuminated by the rays of the sun, shone out, and was so resplendent as to spread a horror over those who looked intently upon him.

21 And upon a day arranged,
Herod arrayed himself in regal apparel,
And seated upon the judgment-seat harangued them.
22 And the populace were shouting,
The voice of a god and not of a man.
23 And immediately a Lord's angel smote him,
Because he did not give the glory to God;
And having become worm-eaten, he expired.

Josephus, from whom we were quoting just above, says that the people said: "We have hitherto reverenced thee only as a man; henceforth we shall own thee as superior to mortal nature." The King did neither rebuke them, nor reject their impious flattery. A severe pain arose in his belly, and began in a most violent manner.

He therefore looked upon his friends, and said, "I, whom you call a god, am commanded forthwith to depart this life; while Providence thus reproves the lying words you said just now to me; and I, who was by you called immortal, am immediately to be hurried away by death. But I am bound to accept what providence allots, as it pleases God; for we have by no means lived ill, but in a splendid and happy manner." [1]

(In thus compiling two accounts, we have, without

[1] Josephus, *Antiq.* 19. 8. 2.

previous intention, illustrated the manner in which our present version of the Pentateuch was compiled from ancient documents now lost.) [1]

Herod lingered five days in great agony, and then expired, in the fifty-fourth year of his age and the seventh year of his reign.

THE LORD'S ANGEL

Is that Lord's angel the same one all through the book ? If so :

He let The Twelve out of prison, and they got a beating.

He sent Philip to Gaza, and he had to flee for refuge to Cæsarea, and probably forfeited much of his property in Jerusalem.

He told Cornelius to send for Peter, and Peter became unpopular in Jerusalem.

He let Peter out of prison, and Peter had to flee 300 miles away for his life.

But now, perhaps, he has the satisfaction of bringing punishment to an impious king. No ! Herod seems to have repented. And when he was lifted out of the waters of earthly-generation, we may think of him reaching the shore of The Promised Land, but possibly in " Dead Sea " surroundings. And then that angel would have to guide him by a long journey over a hard road, before he reached the slopes of the Paradisean Mount of Beatitudes where JESUS is still preaching His sermon, and Hermon where His Glory is manifested.

And when that task was over, the angel would veil face and feet before The Throne and humbly beg for further work to The Praise and Glory of Him-Who-Doeth-All-Things-Well. An angel is an aristocrat, and he fully understands that " noblesse oblige."

But we must return to earth.

[1] Now referred to as J, E, JE, P, and D.

A JUDGMENT !

No doubt the death of Herod was regarded by many as ' a judgment ' on him for his attack on James and Peter.

This fact, combined with the liberality of the Christians of Antioch, probably made it safe for Peter to return again to Judæa, where we find him about A.D. 50.

However that may be, Luke notes as an immediate consequence,

24 And the Word of God was growing and multiplying.

The child-Church was increasing in wisdom and growth, and in favour with God and man. It is now nearly 1900 years old, and but a stripling yet.

GOD put down the mighty from thrones, and exalted the humble.

Thus Luke has traced the course of all things from their beginning, and shown the truth of Blessed Mary's words. GOD's ways are mysterious to us, and not as our ways. It is so in His Work in what we call Nature. Darwin traced the growth of clover through humble-bees, and field-mice, to cats ! And the world would be uninhabitable but for earthworms.

THE RELIEF EXPEDITION

Once more Luke returns to that expedition of help which had been preparing during the time of the events narrated in Chapter **12** ; and for which supplies would be more readily obtained, through Herod's reconciliation with the Phœnicians in the Province of Syria. Luke takes us, probably, to the winter of A.D. 45–46.

25 And Barnabas and Saul filled-full the deaconing (ministering),

Having taken along with them John surnamed
Mark (as an assistant) ;
And they wheeled round again to Jerusalem.

No doubt they called at the house of Mary, the aunt of Barnabas, before commencing their work of distribution in Judæa ; and called again to say good-bye before leaving with their train of camels for Antioch.

We may imagine Paul again making earnest entreaty in The Temple, that the hatred of The Nation against himself might be taken away.

It could not be !

Israel continued to refuse to accept that hegemony over the nations, in the Kingdom of God, which is still their destined inheritance, when the veil shall be taken away from their hearts.

Thus Luke ends Book III., with an introduction of John Mark, who will appear as assistant (deacon) to Barnabas and Saul in Book IV.

CHAPTER Z

THE TEMPLE

FOUNDATIONS AND METHODS

As Tychicus leaves this instalment of Luke's letter on your door-step, he would crave the privilege of a few words with you, Most Excellent Theophilus of the Twentieth Century.

Have you thought Luke somewhat credulous about what we to-day call miracles? He speaks of them as occurrences of which he knew, but does not obtrude more of them on our notice than seems necessary in carrying out his purpose of "tracing the course of all things accurately from the first."

Included in this purpose is the fact that incidentally he shows how The Apostles and Stephen trace the course of the History of The Kingdom back to the Old Testament Scriptures.

GOD's Purpose is One and Unchangeable.

This is in accord with the teaching of The Master. Our Lord spent three years, not only in "going about doing good," but also opening the minds of His followers "that they might understand the Scriptures"; and showing how "The Law and the Prophets and The Psalms (Scriptures) must needs be filled-full." [1]

Both He and His followers were accused of trying to abrogate these Old Testament Writings. But the work

[1] Luke 24. 27, 44, 45. See p. 11.

which He and they did was to clear away much rubbish of Rabbinic Tradition, that the ground might be made ready for the intended structure of that Temple of GOD, which we now call The Holy Catholic Church ; and in clearing away the rubbish, the old sacred word JHVH-ELOHIM once more came to light, and became understood. The old foundations were laid bare, not removed, that the new structure might be built upon them.

What is this Old Testament ?

It is a record of men's failures ; and of GOD's successes with His blunt tools of the human creation.

It is the record of the education of a family of mankind, in preparation for the education of the whole human race.

Some refused to learn.

Some sulked, and obeyed perforce.

Some tried to learn in their own way.

And many were willing to accept His Teaching.

And what is this book which we call " Acts " ?

It is a further record of fuller-filled education.

It displays the weakness, and the strength, of the pioneers ; and shows how those who were willing to learn as little children became strong in Him.

It displays the courage of the pioneers, who despite stonings, beatings, imprisonment, deaths by crucifixion and the sword, pressed on towards the City of God that a path might be cleared for us who come after. They certainly worked miracles on the minds and spirits of men ; shall we deny the possibility of their working wonders sometimes on their bodies ?

The whole of " Acts " is manifestly based on the Old Testament Scriptures.

Will you think it too fanciful, if I trace some parallels ?

Abraham.	*Moses.*	*Saul.*
A Prince of Ur.	A Prince of Egypt.	A Noble of Israel.
In Charran.	In Midian 40 years.	In Tarsus 40 years.
A homeless wanderer in Palestine.	In the Wilderness 40 years.	A wanderer over the Roman Empire.
Covenanted with GOD.	Given " The Law."	Given commission and authority.
No possession in Palestine.	No entrance into Palestine.	Driven from Palestine.
Now in The Promised Land.	Now in The Promised Land.	Now in The Promised Land.

' Israel.'	*The H. C. Church.*	*Jesus.*
A Prince with God.	The offspring of the spouse of JHVH.	SON OF GOD.
In Egypt 400 years (The infancy of The People).	Preserved by imperfect knowledge, and by becoming a Secret Society.	In Egypt in infancy.
Obscure under the Judges, and never a " Great Power."	Not recognised by the world till A.D. 320.	Obscure in Nazareth nearly 30 years.
Given The Law, The Promises, and The Covenant.	Given The New Testament.	Giver of The New Commandment.
Turned out of Palestine 1900 years.	Rejected by The Chosen People.	Turned out of Palestine, by crucifixion.
Waiting.	Waiting.	Now in The Promised Land.

We still look '*from our mountains for the feet of those who bring good tidings to Sion; that shall show to her that her God reigneth.*'

One day God's Servant Israel shall indeed '*prosper, and shall be exalted and lifted up.*' For nineteen centuries '*he has been despised and rejected of men; he has been a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He has borne the evils*' which we Christians '*have laid upon him*'; while we in our arrogancy '*deemed him stricken of God and afflicted.*'

'*As a lamb before her shearers is dumb, Israel has suffered in silence. It has indeed pleased The Lord to bruise him, He hath put him to grief.*' But one day '*he shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied.*'

" And if the casting away of Israel has been more than counter-balanced by the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them back be, but life from the deadness " of much modern Christianity. " And so all Israel," both those who are the descendants of Abraham by race, and those who are children of Abraham by faith, " shall be saved." [1]

Meanwhile we Christian folk have been consigning Israel to Gehenna because of their beautiful faithfulness to Moses.

They have missed some of the meanings of Moses' teaching, no doubt ; but have we Christians learned and kept the more perfect Law of Christ ?

JIG-SAW PUZZLES

The Catholic Church too has suffered in times gone by. And no doubt it must always be the case that " those who would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." [2]

The early times of persecution sawed through much of the New Testament Writings, and they have come down to us somewhat after the fashion of a Jig-saw puzzle, which commentators for centuries have tried to make into a real picture.

This I have tried to do with a bit of this ' patch-work ' of " Acts." I appeal to the artistic sense which is of the spirit of man, to say whether a picture of A.D. 29–46 can be seen here.

Then let the acute minds of scholars say if the lines of the picture really follow across the saw-cuts of persecution, and of partial knowledge.

Christian commentators with scientific minds have subjected this book to a microscopic study of every word

[1] Isa. 52., 53. Rom. 10., 11. [2] 2 Tim. 3. 12.

and letter, every thought and shade of meaning. But the results of their learning fill too many volumes for us average twentieth-century readers. We want rather the lime-light view and the moving picture. Besides, many of us have no biblical microscopes.

And if the fragments of the picture do not fit, in this attempt, when examined by those who are reputed pillars, then it must be burned up as lumber on the Altar of The Faith.

THE MYSTERY

But there can be no reconstruction of this puzzle-picture, which will prove satisfactory, without the recognition of the fact of " The Mystery."

The Greek words of the New Testament are not all to be read as Plato or Thucydides used them. They are the language of the *ordinary* Greek-speaking man of the first century ; and one reason why S. Paul made little impression on the scholars of his day was his deliberate avoidance of the technical language of the philosopher.[1]

But besides that, the whole of the New Testament is full of words and phrases whose full meaning was understood only by those initiated into " The Mystery." And some of the secrets, which have been lost to the Church, have been preserved unwittingly elsewhere.

Only those who had been initiated into " The Mystery " could read the words with perfect understanding of all that was in them. Want of this knowledge has led to some mis-translations in later times.

Our Holy Communion Service appears, when first written, as the memorised forms of an original but growing canon, which varied slightly at different parts of the world, because for so many years the words might not be written.

[1] 1 Cor. 2. 1, 4, 13 ; 2 Cor. 10. 10.

But let us suppose that to-day a great persecution of Christianity arose all over the world; suppose every Christian book was condemned to be burned. In fifty years' time the Book of Common Prayer could be reconstructed practically verbatim from the memories of those who had used it; and who would go on using it in secret. So it has been with other rituals. Through many years of bitterest persecution the Eucharistic Service could only be celebrated in the dead of night. It was no "Pleasant Sunday Evening," after a P.S.M. in bed, and a P.S.A. in the fields. In the dark hours of Sunday a.m., the Early Christians gathered in secrecy for the Breaking of the Bread, and receiving of "The Fish."

Those who were newly admitted were strictly commanded, and undertook an obligation, that they would not write the secret Service now entrusted to them; nor by the least trace of any letter, character, or figure, suffer it to become legible or intelligible to any one in the world who was not a member of that Christian Society which was engaged in the work of building "The Temple of GOD," in which they themselves were "living stones."

The perusal of such a work as Scott's *Old Mortality*, particularly Chapters VI., XIV., XV., XVIII., XXII., XXXI., XXXV., XXXVI., XLIII., may be recommended to any one who would see a more modern picture of the condition of Christians during the second half of the first century.

MIRACLES

In the twentieth century the greatest difficulty in the way of our full acceptance of this book of Luke's is its frank statements about what we call "Miracles."

Now, the man who is afloat on the river twenty miles below the Falls of Niagara sees it flowing silently. He may have heard from others that forty miles higher up the circumstances are almost identical. The force which causes the flow is what we term gravitation.

But between these two points there is a place where there is a roaring greater than that of a mighty wind; there are clouds of spray on which rainbows may be seen; just below the spot are whirlpools and rapids.

But all these phenomena are caused by the same force of gravitation, acting in precisely the same way, under the same law. The changed appearances are due to the conformation of the surface of the Earth, which is out of sight beneath the water.

The man who denies the possibility of the existence of the cataract because he sees and knows a few miles of the smoothly-flowing river, plays the part of Dogberry.

Similarly, there may be cataract points on the stream of time, where there have been manifestations of the effects of the forces of nature which seem to us unusual; but which make the stupendous nature of these forces more evident.

We are learning to-day from Einstein that this Law of Gravitation which has seemed to us so simple and universal, is beyond the grasp of any but trained mathematical minds. It is therefore but folly for any of us to speak of God's violations of His own Laws. When we have thoroughly grasped Kepler's Laws, when we know by heart the Problem of the Three Bodies, when we can follow Einstein's Mathematical Treatises, then we *may* begin to think about suggesting that The Ascension is a violation of the Law of Gravitation.

Until that time, it is better to confess that at present it is beyond our ken. But any day we may see that Law

apparently violated, if we cut off a limb of an elm-tree, and watch the sap rising in defiance of what we have thought to be the universal Law of Gravitation, under which liquids tend to fall to the lowest possible level. Incidentally, we may mention that the Laws of Capillarity do not explain this rise of sap, but are themselves apparently violated also.

THE ĂLTER-NATURAL

We are beginning to learn that the ultimate atoms of what we call material bodies are themselves formed of nuclei and electrons, which appear to be non-material.

We know that a six-inch cube of ice may be forced through a three-inch hole, if we have sufficient force available ; and it will still retain its solid form.

If a slight rise of temperature be brought into play, the block of ice will disappear without any force of our own, through a crack in the floor.

Whilst if we can put it into a solid steel vessel, and heat that vessel to a red-heat, a force will be developed which will break the solid steel into fragments.

If all this is a matter of common knowledge, shall we deny the possibility of a further, at present unknown, form of matter, which will produce still more remarkable effects ?

At present we suppose that there are ninety-two different " elements," of which eighty-seven have been discovered; and they all appear to be formed of electricity, which we do not find to be either solid, liquid, or gaseous, or material in the ordinary sense of that word.

Shall we deny to the Creator the possibility of forming another ninety-two elements, with their countless compounds, out of which the new (spiritual) bodies of the state-after-death may be formed ? And shall we not

suppose that these new bodies may conceivably have some of the properties of what we now call " matter," and of other properties in addition, belonging to a state which we may not call super-natural, but ălter-natural ?

DIMENSIONS

Appearances and visions would be simple matter-of-fact occurrences if there is a " Fourth Dimension " which is as yet unknown to us. This has been well indicated by the author of *Flatland*, published by Seeley & Co. in 1884. Such a Fourth Dimension seems to be indicated by Einstein's deep researches, which have penetrated farther than where any but very few can follow him.

He is plumbing some of the depths of this Gennesareth-Lake of our first existence, and apparently finding it both finite and boundless.

If a Fourth Dimension exists, the passage from earthly existence to the life of Paradise is but a crossing of the plane which bounds ' air ' and ' water ' ; the ' water ' of our earthly existence, and the ' air ' of our second existence. And over both extends the Vault of Heaven, dimly discerned by our present eyes through the muddy waters which surround them.

The shores of The Promised Land are becoming more and more crowded with the cloud of witnesses who await our passage from the life of earth to the life of Paradise.

UP-RISING

Our views of what we call resurrection have been coloured by the transition of the idea from the Greek word *anastasis* through the Latin word *resurrectio*. The original idea in Greek is *standing up*.

Of all created animals, God has made man the one

which naturally stands erect. In His revelation of a future life, He speaks of our *standing upright*, as the second stage of our existence. It may be pictured, after the illustration of S. Paul, as like the standing corn, rising out of the grain of wheat lying in the dust of earth.[1]

A FAIRY TALE

In a lake there lived some fish. Some were large and fat, and some small and hungry. On the left-hand side of the lake there was a better feeding-ground than on the right-hand side. So many of the bigger fish kept the left-hand side for themselves, and drove away the weaker ones to the right-hand side.

Now, round about the lake were fairies, who dipped in their nets, and lifted the fish out of the water on to the shore. When this happened they began to experience a change. Instead of breathing a very small amount of air through their gills, they were now enabled to stand upright and breathe the free air with a newly-developed lung-apparatus. But they were generally frightened, and struggled hard when they were caught in the nets, because they had no idea of the happy change to a higher form of existence which lay before them.

All alike came into a land which seemed infinite, compared with the lake in which they had formerly lived; but which itself at that time seemed enormous.

But those who were drawn out on the right-hand side found themselves in a beautiful "country flowing with milk and honey." Whilst those who were drawn ashore on the other side found a sterile land where the sun beat down upon them with no cooling shade available. They had a long journey to take, before they could reach the happier climes of their formerly less prosperous kin.

But all who were drawn out by the fairies shared in

[1] See 1 Cor. 15. 36–44.

the new existence; and all might hope to attain the most beautiful and the happiest spots.

* * * * *

It was not without purpose that Our Lord lived and worked so much by the shores of the Lake of Gennesareth, and that He chose fishermen to become fishers of men.

FROM ARITHMETIC TO CALCULUS

Many years ago I learned my Multiplication Table, and found it accurate and useful. But it was not the only possible Table. I learned that 3 times 10*d.* made 2.6, not 3.0; *i.e.* 2*s.* 6*d.*, and not 3*s.* 0*d.* This showed me that if 12 had been taken as the basis for numeration instead of 10, the Multiplication Table would have been quite different.

Later on, I found that the Multiplication Table could not be applied to Grammar. There were three persons, first, second, and third; but when these came into the plural they were still first, second, and third, not second, fourth, and sixth.

Still later, I found that the Multiplication Table could not be indiscriminately applied when one studied electricity.

Consideration of such facts as these, and of many others, may teach us that the ordinary laws which relate to finite matters may be, and probably will be, entirely useless when applied to what is infinite.

Page 1 of the Infinite Calculus, which gives us our Creed as indicated by Athanasius, begins with:

Three Ones = ONE.

That is as far as we may expect to get, while in our present existence.

Further, it is manifestly unscientific to judge of what is spiritual, by the laws which we have discovered as governing that which is material or logical.[1]

[1] Cf. 1 Cor. 2. 13–16.

THE WORK OF BUILDING

Meanwhile our work is to continue the building of the Temple of God.

Many others are engaged in it, and some of them do not use our methods, or our style of architecture. The Great Architect has laid down His own plan; and if our portion has to be after the Doric Style, it is not for us to break the carved work of the Corinthian or Gothic Columns elsewhere. Too many axes and hammers have been used in breaking the heads of our fellow-builders, because their plans were not like ours.

. . . ists, and . . . ists, of every age have gathered such a mass of material in heaps, that the actual building has been obscured from the view of the majority of mankind.

The Building already has a beauty of its own, and will eventually surpass all finite conception.

Let us get as many "views" as we can of the Vision of God. And let others tell us of their "views" which we cannot see.

But don't let the glint of our own tilted tin halo delude us into the idea that we are getting an exclusive view of the "Rainbow round about the Throne."

Let us drop the axes and hammers, and let no sound of tool be heard in the house while it is in building.

TO THE FRIENDS OF GOD;
ISRAELITE, ORTHODOX, ROMAN, ANGLICAN,
CATHOLICS AND EVANGELICALS,
FREE-CHURCHMEN AND MODERNISTS,
PHYSICISTS, GEOLOGISTS, AND ARCHÆOLOGISTS,
MASONS ARE WANTED FOR THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE.
ARISE AND BUILD!

PROBABLE CHRONOLOGY

B.C. 4.	Birth of Our Lord.
	Death of Herod the Great.
4–1. ?	Birth of Saul.
A.D. 26.	Pontius Pilate, Procurator.
	Preaching of John The Baptist.
26 (27).	Baptism of Our Lord.
29.	The Crucifixion (March 18th), (or April 7th, A.D. 30).
	Forty Days, The.
	Descent of THE HOLY SPIRIT.
?	Saul's arrival in Jerusalem for instruction under Gamaliel.
30.	Healing of the Lame Man.
31.	Ananias and Sapphira.
	Trial of The Twelve.
31–35.	Prosperity of the High-Jews.
36.	Martyrdom of Stephen.
	Dispersion of the Stephenites.
	Pilate banished to Gaul.
	Marcellus, Procurator.
	Philip in Samaria and Cæsarea.
	Saul's more violent persecution.
37.	Conversion of Saul.
37–39.	Saul in " Arabia."
38.	Herod Agrippa, King in Galilee.
	Quarrel with Tyre and Sidon.
39.	Saul returns to Damascus, and escapes.
	Saul's visit to Peter.
39–41.	Saul in Syria and Cilicia.
	Church has peace.
41.	Claudius, Roman Emperor (Jan. 25).
	Famines begin in various parts of the Roman Empire.

A.D. 41.	Herod Agrippa's Kingdom extended over Judæa, Samaria, and Cæsarea.
	Barnabas goes to Antioch.
	Barnabas searching for Saul.
41, 42.	Barnabas and Saul in Antioch.
43.	Peter's Vision, and visit to Cæsarea.
	Saul and Titus go to Jerusalem.
	Prophecy of Agabus.
44, 45.	Preparations for the Relief Expedition.
44.	James killed. Peter apprehended and released.
	Peter escapes to Antioch.
	Herod Agrippa's Death.
	Cuspius Fadus, Procurator.
45.	Convoy of provisions arrives in Judæa (winter).
	Barnabas and Saul return to Antioch, via Jerusalem.
46.	Famine severe in Judæa.
	Tiberius Alexander, Procurator.
47–49.	Barnabas and Saul's Missionary Journey.
49.	Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch (about October).
	Epistle to Galatians.
50.	Council of Jerusalem (Jan.).
57.	Paul seized at Jerusalem.
57–58.	Paul at Cæsarea. Luke writes his Gospel.
	Passing of the B.V.M.
58.	Festus, Procurator.
59–60.	Paul in Rome. Luke writes Acts.
64.	Great Fire in Rome.
65.	S. Paul's Death. (? S. Luke's Death.)

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